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BETTY'S VIRGINIA CHRISTMAS

BY

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CHAPTER I.

SWEET BETTY

IT was as cold as Christmas, and Christmas Eve it was. A thin crust of snow lay over the level landscape of lower Virginia, and the declining sun cast a lovely rose-red light upon the silver world. Afar off lay the river that led to the great bay, both river and bay frozen hard and fast as steel. The crystal air was sharp and still, and in the opaline sky a little crescent moon smiled at the sparkling stars. Along the broad lane that led from the wooded heights to the spacious brick mansion of Rosehill, seated on the river bank, a great four-horse team trotted merrily, the stout farm-horses snorting with delight, and the negro driver and his helpers laughing, and singing Christmas catches, their voices echoing in the clear, cold air. The Rosehill mansion itself seemed to radiate Christmas cheer. From the warm, wide-throated chimneys curled delicate wreaths of blue smoke, and a venturesome peacock had climbed upon the flat roof and stood on one leg, warming himself comfortably against the hot chimney. The panes of the many windows glittered in the sinking sun, and on the frozen river a couple of skaters flew back and forth like birds upon the wing, their shrill little cries and laughter echoing gaily in the still air.

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A mile down the river lay another cheerful homestead, not stately and wide and long, with marble steps and a fine carriage drive, like Rosehill, but little and low and with a single chimney. No gorgeous peacock huddled against this chimney, but a family of blue pigeons, finding the pigeon-cote chilly, circled about the solitary chimney, and were as merry as if they had been great gorgeous peacocks instead of the humble little birds that they were. The tall holly trees in all their Christmas glory of red and green, on each side of the little porch, gave the place its name of Holly Lodge. From its windows, too, streamed cheerfulness, and a golden fire sang and danced upon the broad hearth in its small sitting-room. But Holly Lodge could not be otherwise than gay, because in it dwelt Betty Beverley, the gayest young creature alive.

Now, Betty had a splendid dowry; that is to say, she had youth, health, gaiety of heart, an indomitable spirit, and a pair of the softest, loveliest, most misleading dark eyes that were ever seen. Betty was the soul of sincerity and truth, yet she was also an arrant hypocrite and flatterer to those she loved. Likewise, she had the heart of a lion concerning burglars, tramps, runaway horses, and dangers of all sorts; but when it came to caterpillars and daddy-long-legs, small spiders and frightened mice, Betty was cowardly beyond words, and shrieked and fled at the mere sight of those harmless creatures. Music and dancing were like foretastes of heaven to Betty, who could dance twenty-five miles a night without the slightest fatigue. But she was the same gay little Betty in the long wintry days at Holly Lodge, with no one for company except her grandfather, Colonel Beverley, and his rheumatism, and Uncle Cesar and his wife, Aunt Tulip, the two old servants who had followed them into exile. For Colonel Beverley was born and reared in the great house of Rosehill, and Betty too was born there, and had passed the whole of her short life in its stately rooms and its old walled garden, except the last year. But evil times had come upon Colonel Beverley, and the piled up mortgages at last drove him forth. The Colonel, tall and straight as an Indian, grim to look at, but gentle at heart, said truly that for himself he minded not Holly Lodge, with its few cramped rooms and its mite of a garden patch; but for little Betty— Here the Colonel's voice would break, and whenever this point was reached in the discussion, Betty always rushed at the Colonel and kissed him all over his handsome, clear-cut, pallid face, and declared that he had insulted her by his hateful remarks, and that she would a thousand times rather live at Holly Lodge with him, than live at Rosehill with millions of dollars, without him. As Betty was very young and unsophisticated, she really believed this, and it comforted the Colonel's weary heart to hear it.

This was their first Christmas at Holly Lodge, but as Betty said to the Colonel on the afternoon of Christmas Eve:

"Granddaddy, I mean this to be the very happiest Christmas we ever had, because we are together, and your rheumatism is better, and I am going to a dance every night this week, and have a perfectly brand new white muslin gown to wear, and goodness knows what will be left of it after six dances, because I never really begin to enjoy myself until I have torn my gown all to pieces!"

While Betty was saying this, she was standing, delicately poised, on a table, putting a wreath of laurel-leaves around the portrait of Colonel Beverley, taken in his youth, when he was a boy officer, with his first epaulets, his hand sternly grasping his sword. Above the portrait hung the same sword, and Betty was wont to decorate the hilt with a sprig of laurel, too. The portrait was a handsome picture, and the Colonel was secretly proud of it. A part of Betty's outrageous flattery of Colonel Beverley was that on great occasions she would decorate the picture with laurel leaves, and assure the Colonel, solemnly, that nothing would induce her to marry until she could find a man as handsome as he was in his youth. The Colonel, sitting in his great chair, listened to this for the hundredth time with the greatest pleasure. Since that St. Martin's summer of his youth, there had been a long period of tranquil life at Rosehill. Then had come the great tragedy of the war-time, and Colonel Beverley had put on a gray uniform, and ridden at the head of the regiment the county raised, his stalwart son, Betty's father, riding by his bridle. The Colonel came back in four years to Rosehill, but the young son lay buried in the Bed of Honor, with a bullet through his brave young heart. Betty was a dark-eyed baby girl in those days. Now, she was a dark-eyed girl of twenty, and was all the Colonel had left in this world. Even Rosehill went with the rest. The back of Colonel Beverley's chair was against the window which looked toward Rosehill, for the Colonel was sixty-eight, and could not forget wholly the sixty-seven years when Rosehill had been his home, and did not like to look toward the place. To make it worse, Rosehill had been bought by some rich Northern people, who had wickedly and sacrilegiously, as the Colonel considered, put a furnace in the house, electric lights and many other modern and devilish inventions, which harrowed his soul. So, like a wise man, he turned his eyes away.

Within the plain little room were some relics that had survived the universal wreck. There was Betty's harp, to which she sang the old-fashioned ballads the Colonel loved, and the Beverley punch-bowl—a great bowl of old Lowestoft porcelain, with three medallions, representing hunting scenes, and an inscription in faded gilt, "For John Beverley, Esq., of Virginia." It had belonged to many John Beverleys, Esquires, before it came to the Colonel, and was regarded as a sort of fetich in the family. Betty alone had the responsibility of dusting it, and Uncle Cesar would say solemnly:

"I would a heap ruther break my arm than break that bowl."

Beside the bowl, there were some quaint old silver and the 1807 decanters, huge things of pink and white cut glass, that had known good vintage in their day. By Betty's harp lay her grandfather's fiddle case, for the Colonel loved his fiddle, and he and Uncle Cesar, his "boy," fiddled seriously together, as they had done since they were small boys, sixty years before, and had been rapped over the head with the same fiddle-bow.

There were a plenty of windows in the little room, and, as muslin curtains are cheap, there were plenty of curtains, and geraniums and verbenas too were abundant, as they cost nothing at all. On the walls was a pretty paper, all roses and green leaves, pasted on by Betty's own hands, with Uncle Cesar holding the stepladder while she worked, singing cheerily all the time. It was Betty too who had painted the shabby woodwork white, daubing away gaily, and laughing at her blunders. Nevertheless, she had succeeded, for Betty was a very efficient person. The chimney had a wide throat and drew like a windlass. So, on the whole, the sitting-room at Holly Lodge was a cheerful place.

Betty, standing on the table, was so engrossed in her occupation of getting the laurel wreath right over the Colonel's picture, that she did not hear the tramp of a horse's hoofs outside, nor a knock at the front door, nor Uncle Cesar opening it and a man's tread in the little hall. In her eagerness, she reached up very far, and although she was a slim creature, the rickety table trembled under her light foot, and the Colonel cried out:

"Mind, Betty, mind!"

But it was too late. The table swayed, and Betty uttered a little shriek and came down with a crash, not upon the floor, but in the arms of a handsome young officer in his cap and military cloak, who appeared to have dropped down the chimney. The Colonel started up and Uncle Cesar rushed in from the hall, followed by Aunt Tulip from the kitchen. Betty managed to disengage her skirts from the spurs of the young officer, and then stood upon her feet, utterly bewildered. The only person who was not panic-stricken was the young officer himself, who stood bowing, cap in hand.

"Pray excuse me," he said to Betty, bowing low to her and then to the Colonel. "Just as I was about to enter the room, I saw that you were tottering, and ran forward and caught you just in time. I am afraid you would have had a bad fall, otherwise."

"You are perfectly excusable, sir," said the Colonel, rising grandly. "Your advent was most fortunate, as, although I saw my granddaughter's danger, I had not the agility, with my years and rheumatism, to catch her as you did. May I ask to whom I am indebted?"

"I am Mr. Fortescue," said the young officer, laying a card down

on the table, "of the United States army, and the son of Mr. Fortescue of Rosehill."

At that the Colonel's face changed a little. He had not yet grown used to the name of Fortescue of Rosehill. But Betty did not mind. She saw only that Mr. Fortescue was young and had a fine, supple figure, and a pair of laughing eyes like her own, and a trim little black mustache, and a close-cropped black head, and a very graceful manner.

"I thank you, too, Mr. Fortescue," she said, holding out her slim hand, which the young lieutenant took. "I think our acquaintanceship has had a very auspicious beginning."

To this Fortescue replied gallantly:

"If it saved you from a fall, I shall certainly consider it most auspicious."

Then they looked into each other's eyes and laughed, as young creatures do who have the sweet and subtle understanding of youth. The Colonel then said:

"Perhaps you know my name—Colonel Beverley—and this is my granddaughter, Miss Elizabeth Beverley. Will you be seated?"

Uncle Cesar took Fortescue's military cloak away, and the young officer sat with his handsome head and elegant figure outlined against the strong light of the window.

"I must beg pardon for my intrusion," he said to the Colonel, "but I have come upon official business—hence my uniform."

"I understand, sir," replied the Colonel. "I have worn both the cadet gray and the army blue. Later, I resigned and spent some tranquil years at Rosehill. When the irrepressible conflict came, I put on a gray uniform, as did my son—my only son—the father of this young lady."

Here the Colonel indicated Betty, who spoke quickly and with pride:

"Yes, I am a soldier's daughter and proud of it."

"The soldier should be proud of it," promptly answered Fortescue, with a smile. Betty was no Quaker maiden, but came of fighting stock.

"My errand," continued Fortescue, turning to the Colonel, "is from my superior officer, Major Studly, who is engaged in making some military surveys in this neighborhood. We hope to go into camp by March. I have found an excellent place for our encampment, with running water for the animals, and a spring, about five miles from here, in the rolling country. I understand that the land is yours, and Major Studly asks your permission to occupy it for a month or six weeks, perhaps. Of course—er—er—compensation will be made for its use by the Government."

"Compensation be hanged!" replied the Colonel blandly. "It gives me pleasure to oblige a brother officer, although the United States Government may go to the devil!"

Fortescue smiled at this. From the great fortress thirty miles away, he had made various incursions into the country, and had happened upon many gallant old irreconcilables, like Colonel Beverley, who felt it their duty to hurl defiance upon the United States Government, although they were really among its best citizens.

"I thank you very much," said Fortescue, in a manner as courtly as the Colonel's, "not only for myself, but for Major Studly. We will do as little damage as possible. No doubt we shall be able to buy the wood we need for our encampment."

"Not from me, sir," promptly replied the Colonel. "You are welcome to all the wood you need, and if it is too much trouble to cut it down, burn up the fence-rails, sir."

Colonel Beverley liked to act the grand seigneur, but, owing to unfortunate circumstances, he was able to be grand only in small matters, like fence-rails.

During this conversation, Betty sat demurely in her chair. At the mention of compensation, a rosy vision passed before her eyes of a new roof to the kitchen, and possibly a new gown for herself. But when the Colonel magnanimously presented the Government of the United States with the use of his land and as many fence-rails as were necessary for fires, Betty, with a lofty spirit not unlike the Colonel's, dismissed the hope of repairing the kitchen and the vision of the new gown.

Fortescue, however, had no intention of confining his conversation to the Colonel, and so, looking toward Betty, said:

"This is my first visit to this county."

"I hope you are pleased with Rosehill," replied Colonel Beverley. "Rosehill has sheltered seven generations of Beverleys. The present mansion was built by my grandfather, succeeding a smaller house built by the first Beverley of Rosehill."

"I admire the house very much," said Fortescue. "I am only sorry that my profession will prevent me from spending much time there until I am retired, thirty-six years from now."

"Rosehill is a noble inheritance," replied Colonel Beverley.

They were upon delicate ground, but it was impossible that the subject of Rosehill could be avoided at their first meeting. Fortescue congratulated himself on getting smoothly over a difficult subject.

"I hope, however," he continued, still smiling at Betty, "to make frequent visits here as long as I am stationed on this coast. I believe both the hunting and shooting are fine."

"Excellent," said the Colonel. "It has been a good many years since I indulged in either. My granddaughter, however, likes the hunting field."

"Yes," answered Betty. "We have n't a swell hunt club like you

have at the North, but our foxes are just as wary and our dogs as intelligent. Day after to-morrow there is to be the grand Christmas hunt."

"That, sir," explained Colonel Beverley, "is an annual custom in the county. The gentlemen in this vicinity all assemble at daybreak at the house of some gentleman in the neighborhood, for at daybreak the scent lies. The huntsmen have a hasty breakfast by candle-light, and start out before sunrise. The fox is seldom caught for several hours, because we have the red fox in this county, which can double many times on his pursuers. Then the victorious huntsman presents the brush to the lady he wishes to compliment. It is a little ceremony of great antiquity. And then they have the hunt breakfast, with egg-nog, the flower of all seductive beverages which bloom at Christmas-time."

"Do you think it is possible," asked Fortescue of Betty, "that I, with three of my brother officers, who are spending Christmas with me, could be permitted to join in the Christmas hunt day after to-morrow?"

"Certainly," cried Betty. "The huntsmen are to meet at Bendover, the Carteret place, and Sally Carteret is my best friend."

Although the great fortress lay only thirty miles off, and was well known by sight to Betty Beverley and Sally Carteret and all the other girls in the county, the dashing young officers were not much in evidence, and Betty secretly gloried at the idea of presenting four of these adorable creatures at the Christmas hunt. As for Fortescue, who knew the world well, the frank confidence and the cordial hospitality of these unsophisticated country gentlepeople delighted him beyond words.

Then they talked awhile on what the rest of the world was talking about, Betty listening with all her ears, and putting in an occasional word. Most of Fortescue's conversation was addressed to the Colonel, but his eyes were furtively fixed on Betty's charming face and her little feet, with buckles on her low shoes showing coquettishly from the edge of her gown. Fortescue professed an admiration and affection for Rosehill which, it must be admitted, was very much accentuated by Betty's bright eyes. Colonel Beverley, with finely shaded sarcasm, expressed regret that Fortescue's father, the great New York banker, should not spend more time at Rosehill, and Fortescue assumed an apologetic attitude for his father, and was full of regret that he himself was debarred from being much at Rosehill.

"You chose the profession of a soldier," said the Colonel, "when, as I understand, you might very well have been a well fed drone in the hive."

"Hardly," replied Fortescue, smiling. "My father does n't like drones. He is himself a man of action and achievement, and my two brothers have been trained to work in my father's own line. But I always loved the military profession, and have no taste nor indeed

capacity for any other. It is one of the sacrifices of an army life that I can come to Rosehill only at intervals. But wait until I retire, thirty-six years from now. Then I intend to settle myself at Rosehill permanently."

"I am afraid I can't wait so long," said the Colonel, smiling.

"But I can," answered Betty. "And when you come back you will find me on the retired list, too, still Miss Betty Beverley, of Holly Lodge."

Of this Fortescue expressed the utmost disbelief.

Then Fortescue and Betty talked about the gaieties of the Christmas week. There was to be a dance every night, in addition to the Christmas hunt. Fortescue expressed the deepest regret that, being unknown in the county, neither he nor his guests at Rosehill would be likely to receive invitations, but on this point he was reassured by Colonel Beverley.

"I understand," he said, "that you and your friends arrived only yesterday. My granddaughter told me yesterday morning that for the first time this winter smoke was coming out of the Rosehill chimneys. As soon as people find out that you are in the county, you will certainly receive invitations to everything that is desirable."

Fortescue professed a pious hope that this might come true. Then, feeling that he had stayed as long as he possibly could for a first visit, Fortescue rose and shook hands with the Colonel, who cordially invited him and his friends to Holly Lodge. When Betty laid her little hand in his, Fortescue said, as he gave it a delicate pressure:

"If Miss Sally Carteret is kind enough to invite my friends and myself to the Christmas hunt, may I hope that you will chaperon us?"

"Yes," replied Betty; "provided you are not too lazy. On hunting mornings, I am in the saddle by six o'clock. I have n't a very imposing mount. Old Whitey pulls the rockaway, and is n't above hauling wood and going to the mill, but he has a strain of Diomedé blood in him, and there's life in the old horse yet."

This gave Fortescue an inspiration, but, being a natural diplomat, he kept it to himself.

Uncle Cesar was waiting in the narrow little passage with Fortescue's military cloak, and brought up his horse, which had been standing with the reins thrown over a limb of one of the great holly trees. As Fortescue rode past the window, sitting straight and square on his high-bred chestnut, Betty glued her nose to the window-pane, and, much to her embarrassment, was seen by Fortescue, who raised his cap, and bowed to his saddle-bow.

Betty watched him as he galloped along the road that lay through the open fields to Rosehill. The vision of the Christmas hunt grew bright. She would see Sally Carteret that night at the dance at Mar-

rowbone, and Sally was no more likely to deny an invitation to four captivating young officers than Betty herself. Betty brought her mind back with a jerk from this new and brilliant element which had suddenly burst into her placid life, to the preparations for Christmas. They were such as would be made in the small household of a bankrupt Virginia colonel and his granddaughter, his "boy" of sixty-five and the "boy's" wife of sixty, but they were illuminated by the true Christmas spirit, that sweet inspiration and good will, the radiance of the Star of Bethlehem. By much scheming and saving, Betty had acquired enough money to buy for the Colonel a military history in several volumes, for which he had expressed a wish. Equally, with infinite pains and secrecy, the Colonel had contrived out of his scanty purse to buy for Betty a little locket and chain; and there were simple presents for Uncle Cesar and Aunt Tulip, useful things that would make them more comfortable. And from the two old faithful servants were humble gifts that were highly rated by Betty and the Colonel. Then there were the preparations for the Christmas dinner the next day. Although there was not much money in the little brown house of Holly Lodge, there were oysters a-plenty upon the river shore, and a green turtle had been lying on his back for a week in the cellar, to be made into turtle soup for the Christmas dinner, and Aunt Tulip had a dozen bronze turkeys which kept her busy, of which the patriarch, a noble gobbler, had gobbled his last *morituri salutamus*. A dish of terrapin, and a half dozen partridges, knocked over by Uncle Cesar, who had a rusty old gun, and a monumental plum pudding, were mere adjuncts to the feast.

It had been the Colonel's practice, at the old mansion at Rosehill, to invite half the county to his Christmas dinner. In the little sitting-room at Holly Lodge, there was not much room for anybody or anything except the big furniture and the Colonel's fiddle-case and Betty's harp; besides, the Colonel, after his misfortunes, had, as yet, not much heart for company. He and Betty had had dozens of invitations from all over the county and beyond, for Christmas, but, as Betty said: "Granddaddy and I have always been together at Christmas ever since I can remember, and he had nobody but me and I had nobody but him, and so we must stay together on Christmas Day, Granddaddy and I."

The dusk had come before Betty had finished her preparations for the next day, and then it was time to dress for the party at Marrowbone, the Lindsay place, where there were young students home from the University of Virginia, and a great jollification was to be had. The clutch of cold upon the world had tightened as the red sun disappeared and the stars came out in the dark blue heavens. In Betty's little white bedroom, however, a glorious wood fire was roaring, and the scent of the odoriferous wood and of the geraniums in the window made

a delicious atmosphere. Betty stood before the fire, warming her little feet, and saying to herself:

"How I wish we could afford to have a boy to bring up wood and pick up chips and do so many things that Uncle Cesar has to do, and really is n't able, poor old soul!"

Then Betty's mind reverted to former Christmases, at Rosehill, when there were plenty of servants and plenty of everything except money, and Betty in her ignorance knew nothing of debts and duns and mortgages and such unpleasant things. She looked about her with a little air of discontent, and thought of her beautiful big corner bedroom at Rosehill, with its marble mantel and the ornamental plaster frieze around the ceiling, and the bell to ring, by which a maid always appeared. But, being a courageous person, Betty took herself in hand, and put an immediate stop to painful reflections. She went up to the little dressing table, lighted by a candle on each side of the mirror, and, shaking her small fist wrathfully at her reflection in the glass, proceeded to lecture herself severely.

"Now, Betty Beverley," she said sternly, puckering her forehead, "this sort of useless repining is perfectly disgraceful, and has got to stop. Do you understand, Betty? It has got to stop. You have got your grandfather and a great many comforts and blessings, and you don't owe any money, and you are young and very, very pretty——"

At this point, Betty's brow smoothed out, her eyes assumed a beatific expression, and her rosy lips came wide open, showing a lovely, elusive dimple in her left cheek.

"It is no use denying it, it is a fact and a very agreeable one, but, as Aunt Tulip says, 'Beauty ain't nothin'; behavior's all.' Your good looks won't amount to anything if you are a coward and a poltroon; and you a soldier's daughter and granddaughter, with no more pluck than a chicken! Betty, I am ashamed of you. Now, make up your mind to act like a soldier's daughter and granddaughter——"

And at this moment, Fortescue, whose image had been lingering in Betty's memory, suddenly came to the front. She saw him in her mind's eye, galloping past the window, his military cloak around him, his cap set firmly on his handsome head, his look, his attitude, everything about him, proclaiming the soldier. Betty's smile changed from mirth to one of dreamy anticipation. There is much flavor in the wine of life at twenty.

She went to the window, and, putting her hands on each side of her eyes, so that she could look out into the gathering gloom of the winter night, saw afar off the windows of Rosehill shining with light. On the day after Christmas she would see that young soldier again. Betty made a rapid calculation—it would be just twenty-six hours. At the thought a smile began in Betty's soft eyes and ended on her rosy lips.

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTMAS COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR

BEGINNING with Christmas Eve, there was a party every night for Betty, and as wind and weather count for nothing where merry young people are concerned, Betty prepared to go, in spite of the biting cold, and a knife-like wind that came howling down from Labrador. Uncle Cesar was to take her to the parties, in the little, old-fashioned rockaway, drawn by the one horse which was all the stable of which Holly Lodge could boast. The homeliness of her equipage did not in the least disconcert Betty.

"Because," as Betty said to herself, "everybody knows I am Betty Beverley of Rosehill, and the Rosehill Beverleys can do as they please about carriages and clothes, and a blessed good thing it is, as the family is down on its luck at present."

Betty had a variety of euphemisms to disguise the unpleasant facts of life. Poverty was being down on one's luck; simple clothes were a joke; and shabbiness, a mere romantic incident, for such was the glorious philosophy of pretty Betty.

And pretty Betty was, standing that night before the dressing-table in her little hip-roofed room, with its two dormer windows looking toward Rosehill. Unlike the Colonel, Betty did not avoid the sight of Rosehill. In full sight of her dormer windows was the big, square house with its ample grounds and straggling stables and picturesque ice-house. Sometimes she sighed when she looked at the fine old mansion, but Betty choked down her sighs with a smile, and stoutly told herself that she was perfectly happy at Holly Lodge, and asked nothing better.

There were, however, no sighs for Betty that Christmas Eve, as she looked with shining eyes into her mirror. Her white gown, made by her own clever fingers, fitted to perfection, and revealed all the delicate loveliness of her white neck and her slender arms. Around her throat was her great-grandmother's amethyst necklace, and her simple bodice was draped with her great-grandmother's lace bertha. Her rich hair, with its soft tendrils curling upon her neck, was adorned with a wreath of ivy leaves, and tiny moss rosebuds from the rosebush in the window of the sitting-room. This little wreath gave Betty the look of a woodland nymph. Aunt Tulip, who acted as lady's maid, during the intervals of her duty as cook, housemaid, and what-not, was lost in admiration, and suggested that Betty would "cert'n'y ketch a beau." This simple flattery delighted Betty, especially as all the time she was dressing her mind was fixed upon the charms of Lieutenant John Hope Fortescue of the United States army.

When Betty was quite dressed, and had given herself a final survey in the glass, Aunt Tulip went down to see if the rockaway was hitched

up with old Whitey. Betty, left alone, blew out the candles, and, drawing the curtains, looked out of her window once more at Rosehill, a mile across the open fields. Yes, the house was lighted up cheerfully—it was Betty's pet grievance that the place was unoccupied for such long intervals. In some way, after that visit from Jack Fortescue, Betty was more reconciled to Mr. Fortescue's owning Rosehill. She could imagine how jolly it must be there with half a dozen young officers, and if they were all as charming as Lieutenant John Hope Fortescue—Betty blushed a rosy red at the remembrance of her sudden descent from the top of the table into Fortescue's arms.

While Betty was chasing these fancies, like white butterflies dancing in the sun, she noticed a small black figure far down the lane. It was coming toward Holly Lodge, tramping with short steps through the crust of snow. As the object drew nearer, Betty's keen eyes discovered that it was a small boy—a very small boy. Betty wondered why so small a child should be sent out in the winter night. As he came within the circle of red light from the front door, Betty saw that the boy was black and very ragged.

By this, it was time for Betty to go downstairs and show herself to the adoring eyes of her grandfather. Colonel Beverley, sitting in his great chair by the fire, surveyed Betty with profound satisfaction as she marched solemnly up and down, and pirouetted before him to show her new white satin slippers, with glittering buckles. From the wreath of roses down to these little slippers, the Colonel found Betty altogether adorable, and told her so.

While Betty was giving stern orders to the Colonel to go to bed promptly at ten o'clock, and not to smoke more than two pipes, Aunt Tulip came into the sitting-room from the nearby kitchen.

"Miss Betty," proclaimed Aunt Tulip, with the air of announcing a catastrophe, "what you think done happen now? Them good-for-nothin' niggers that come here from I dunno where, and brought a little boy wid 'em, done gone away—they taken the boat to-day at the landin'. And this heah boy, as ain't got no father nor no mother, and say he doan't believe he never had none, got skeered at the steamboat, and turn 'roun' and run away heah! What we gwine ter do 'bout him?"

"Bring him in," cried Betty, suddenly remembering the little boy she had seen creeping through the snow.

Aunt Tulip disappeared, and returned with a small colored boy, very black, very ragged, almost shoeless, but with beady eyes cheerful as Betty's own, and a row of shining teeth which he showed freely. The solemn book of life evidently had no terrors for him.

As he saw Betty in her party gown, with the wreath on her delicate head, a rapturous look came into the eyes of the waif, his grin broadened, he seemed to have a vision of Paradise.

"Why," cried Betty, "he's as black as the kettle! What's your name, little boy?"

"Solomon 'Zekiel Timons," replied the waif, now fairly laughing with joy amid his rags.

"Where did you come from?" asked the Colonel.

Then Solomon 'Zekiel Timons, prompted by Aunt Tulip, told his story. He lived with some colored people who were always on the move. Lately, they had been living not far from Holly Lodge, and the waif knew Miss Betty by sight, and thought she was "the beautifullest lady ever I see." He did not know whether the colored people were related to him or not, nor where he was born, nor anything except his name. He had not been ill-treated, but he did not always have enough to eat, and he knew his "clo'es was mighty raggety." The colored people were going somewhere by the steamboat, and he had gone that day to the wharf with them, their belongings packed on an ox-cart. But on reaching the wharf, and seeing the steamboat, Solomon Ezekiel's heart had fainted within him. The grin left his little black face, and his round beady eyes grew terrified when he described in jerky sentences the horrors of the steamboat.

"There wuz two gre't wheels," he gasped, opening his arms wide, "as big as dis heah house—an' they keeps on a-churnin' and a-churnin'! An' a awful thing on top de boat goin' up an' down like dis"—here Solomon 'Zekiel gave a very realistic imitation of a side-wheel steamer in motion.

"An' den"—his frightened voice sank to a whisper—"fo' it reach de wharf, de steamboat hollered—it jes' keep on hollerin' an' screechin' an' de smoke jes' po'in' outen a chimley, an' de steamboat everlastin' hollerin'. An' I wuz so skeered, I jes' run offen de wharf an' come heah."

Solomon 'Zekiel coolly ignored the fact that the steamboat landing was five miles away, and that he had trudged through the biting cold and the snow, in his poor rags and broken shoes, all that distance—and he was a very little fellow indeed.

"Have you had anything to eat since breakfast?" asked Betty, with melting eyes.

"Naw, 'm," promptly answered Solomon 'Zekiel.

"And this is Christmas Eve!" cried Betty. "Now Aunt Tulip will take you into the kitchen and give you a good supper, Solomon 'Zekiel—oh, I can't stand all that name—you are as black as the kettle, so we'll just call you Kettle for the present."

His new name and the prospect of supper seemed to delight the little negro beyond words.

By that time Uncle Cesar had driven the rockaway up to the door, and the Colonel was handing Betty in and muffling her up, as one

muffles up his chief and only treasure. Aunt Tulip brought out Uncle Cesar's fiddle-case with his fiddle, for Uncle Cesar was an essential person in that neighborhood, on account of his expert fiddling. Old Whitey, a big, handsome horse, was dancing about in a manner so sprightly, in spite of his thirteen years, that Betty felt certain he would make a good appearance at the Christmas hunt.

It was not much after seven o'clock, but early hours are kept in the country, and there was a six-mile drive between Holly Lodge and Marrowbone. Betty enjoyed the drive, inhaling the icy, crisp night air as if it were champagne. Old Whitey did the six miles in less than an hour, and Betty was in the thick of the arrivals for the party. The hospitable host, Major Lindsay—for there were many majors and colonels in Virginia in those days—met his guests on the great portico, with the big wooden Doric columns.

"How do you do, Miss Betty?" he cried. "And where is the Colonel, pray?"

"Granddaddy sent his compliments and regrets, but he says he is really too rheumatic to go out to dances," answered Betty, slipping out of the rockaway.

"Nonsense, nonsense!" shouted the Major, who was big and florid and handsome. "The Colonel is as able to shake a leg as ever he was, by George! I hope Cesar has brought the fiddle, because we are reckoning upon him."

"Yes, sirree," answered Uncle Cesar, with important emphasis. "I got some rheumatiz, too, same like ole Marse, but mine is in my legs, thank Gord A'mighty, and ain't tech my bow arm yet, praise the Lamb!"

Betty tripped up the steps, and Major Lindsay gallantly escorted her into the wide hall.

Within this great hall were Christmas mirth and brightness and laughter and bright eyes and gay smiles. The house, following the plan of most houses of Eastern Virginia, had a splendid great hall, big enough for a ball-room, and always used for dancing; for the people of Virginia are inveterate dancers, and a house is but poorly provided which cannot furnish space for balls. Holly wreaths were everywhere, and over each door was a sprig of mistletoe, causing the ladies to scamper through the doorways with little shrieks of laughter, while the gentlemen used strategies to intercept them.

Already dancing had begun, though the orchestra was by no means complete without Uncle Cesar. But the impatient young feet could not wait. Isaac Minkins, a saddle-colored person, who combined the profession of driving a fish-cart in the day-time and fiddling in the evening, was the director of the orchestra, and his sole assistant, until Uncle Cesar arrived, was a coal black youth who also helped on the fish-cart, and who performed upon the concertina, or, as the negroes call it, the

"lap organ." Uncle Cesar, who was quickly hustled into the hall, promptly tuned up and played second fiddle.

By that time Betty had run upstairs, thrown off her wraps, taken one hasty but satisfactory view of herself in the mirror, and was stepping daintily down the staircase. Now, Betty, who was a scheming and designing creature, knew exactly how to descend the stairs into the dancing hall. This descent down the fine staircase in full view of the assembled company was an effective part of the programme, and the artful Betty, with an outspread fan in one hand and holding up her filmy white skirts with the other just enough to show her little white satin slippers, was the prettiest picture imaginable. So thought Lieutenant John Hope Fortescue of the United States Army, and several other admirers, both old and new. As Betty came down the stairs with what appeared to be unstudied grace, but was not, her soft eyes swept the dancers below, and she nodded and smiled back at those who recognized her. But she did not see Fortescue until she was almost at the last step, when he came forward and took her hand. He had been strikingly handsome in uniform, and he was scarcely less so in his well fitting evening clothes, although Betty, like all women, had a secret hankering for uniforms.

"Good evening, Miss Beverley," said Fortescue, and Betty gave a pretty little start of real surprise.

"Good evening," she said, and then hesitated.

"And how did I get here?" said Fortescue, laughing and answering the look of surprised inquiry in Betty's eloquent face. "The greatest streak of luck that ever happened! When I got back to Rosehill, I found Major Lindsay had come to call—the kindest and most hospitable people that ever lived are in Virginia, I believe—and he invited us to come over to this party. We fairly jumped down his throat, I can tell you, we were so glad to accept."

"And I am so glad you did," said Betty affably.

She had never laid eyes on Fortescue until four hours before, but Betty was Southern, and a Virginian at that, and readily assumed a tone of the warmest friendship with every personable young man she met, immediately after making his acquaintance.

"And now," continued Betty in an imploring tone, as if there were not another man within a hundred miles, "will you be kind enough to take me up to Mrs. Lindsay to speak to her?"

"Certainly," replied Fortescue, placing her little gloved hand within his arm, and improving his opportunities as he did so.

It was not an easy matter for Betty to reach Mrs. Lindsay, standing at the other end of the hall. Betty was stopped every minute by girls speaking to her, and by young men asking dances of her. The girls called her "Betty" and the young men called her "Miss Betty," so

Fortescue promptly dropped the formal "Miss Beverley" and called her "Miss Betty," as if he had known her for a hundred years.

Meanwhile, the first fiddle and the "lap organ," reinforced by Uncle Cesar's stout bow arm, were playing energetically "I's Gwine Back to Dixie," and Betty's slender feet danced rather than walked up the hall. At last they were standing before Mrs. Lindsay, stout, handsome, and florid, like the Major, and receiving her guests with the genuine and heartfelt hospitality of her husband. The hostess greeted them warmly, and, above the music and merry chatter, screamed without any punctuation whatever:

"How do you do Betty so glad to see you sorry your grandfather can't be here Tom's brought four of his friends from the University and you must dance with them all so delighted to have Mr. Fortescue and the other officers from Rosehill go right into the library and get some hot biscuit and coffee you must be so cold after your drive how do you do," etc., etc., saying similar kind things to the next arrival.

And then Tom Lindsay, a University of Virginia sophomore, swooped down on Betty; but just as he caught her hand, Fortescue, who knew both how to act and to think, put his arm around Betty's waist, and they whirled off to the strains of "I's gwine back to Dixie, where the orange-blossoms blow." Betty, however, managed to put her hand in Tom Lindsay's and to say, as everybody said to everybody else:

"Oh, so glad to see you! Have just been dying of loneliness without you;" and when safely out of Tom's hearing Betty whispered into Fortescue's ear, "Such a nice boy! We used to play together. Of course, I have to say things like that to the child." By which it may be seen that Miss Betty Beverley was a most unprincipled person when it came to dealing with personable young men, and did not have the New England conscience or any other conscience, where flattering a young man was concerned.

When the dance was over, Fortescue, like an able commander, following up his advantage, mentioned to Betty that they should accept Mrs. Lindsay's suggestion and go into the library and have the coffee and biscuits which were always served immediately upon the arrival of guests at a Virginia party. This did not appeal particularly to Betty, but when Tom Lindsay came up and told her that he wanted to introduce his fellow students to her, and they would all go into the library together for coffee, Fortescue suddenly remembered that he must introduce his brother officers also to Betty. This was enough to send Betty rapidly into the library, where she found herself in an Elysium of University students and second lieutenants. Being a generous soul, Betty seized upon Sally Carteret, a tall, handsome girl, and divided her plunder of students and officers with Sally. It was only necessary to mention that Mr. Fortescue and his friends would stay

over Christmas day, for Sally to invite them to the Christmas hunt and breakfast at Bendover. Seeing there was no chance of monopolizing Betty, Fortescue found Sally, with her gypsy beauty, by no means a bad substitute.

Between the dances, raids were made into the library, where from a big table hot coffee and buttered biscuits, with "old ham" that had been cured in the smoke from hickory ashes for a couple of years—a great Virginia luxury—and a round of beef, were served as a mere preliminary to the big supper which was coming later. By the great fireplace in which a noble fire blazed and leaped, stood a table with a huge bowl of apple toddy. The older gentlemen, who were at cards in the drawing-room with prim, elderly ladies, made frequent incursions upon the apple toddy. The ladies carefully avoided this seductive brew and kept to weak tea and thin biscuit.

The dancing went on gaily until half past eleven o'clock, when the concoction of the Christmas egg-nog began. Every gentleman was supplied with a plate in which had been broken the whites of four eggs, and a silver fork was furnished to beat up the eggs. They had to be beaten so stiff that the plate could be held over the head of a lady without dropping upon her. Such was the tradition, but only a few ladies took the risk, holding out, meanwhile, their dainty handkerchiefs over their heads to catch the whipped-up whites in case they fell. Betty was one of the venturesome ones, and Fortescue was her cavalier, and turned the plate over her head, but not a drop fell upon Betty's outspread lace handkerchief. Then the whites of the eggs were mixed with the beaten up yolks and the whipped cream and the "stiffening," as Major Lindsay called it, who, as host, did the mixing, and then ladled out the foaming egg-nog. At twelve o'clock exactly Major Lindsay held up his glass and shouted, "Merry Christmas!" and a great chorus went up of "Merry Christmas! Merry, merry Christmas!" Then Isaac Minkins, with a magnificent flourish of his bow, burst forth into the strains of "The Flowing Bowl." All joined in the great Christmas song, Major Lindsay's big baritone leading the chorus:

"For to-night we'll merry, merry be,
For to-night we'll merry, merry be,
For to-night we'll merry, merry be,
And to-morrow we'll be sober."

Then the gentlemen roared out:

"Here's to the man who drinks good ale and goes to bed quite mellow.
He lives as he ought to live, and dies a — good fellow.
He lives as he ought to live,
He lives as he ought to live,
He lives as he ought to live,
And dies a — good fellow."

"Here's to the man who drinks no ale and goes to bed quite sober.
He withers as the leaves do, and dies in the month of October.
He withers as the leaves do,
He withers as the leaves do,
He withers as the leaves do,
And dies in the month of October."

Then came the verse in which all the ladies joined with great enthusiasm:

"Here's to the girl who gets a kiss, and runs and tells her mother.
May she live to be an old maid, and never get another!"

The chorus pealed out, Betty Beverley's clear and ringing soprano above all the rest:

"May she live to be an old maid,
May she live to be an old maid,
May she live to be an old maid,
And never get another."

Then the folding doors to the dining-room were thrown open and the real supper was served, to which coffee, biscuit, "old ham," and the round of beef were merely the appetizers. An emperor of a turkey was at the head of the table, with another at the foot, and one at each side scarcely inferior in imperial splendor. There were cold pickled oysters, and hot oysters creamed, steamed, fried, stewed, and in scallop shells. There were great dishes of terrapin, not indeed the diamond-back of Maryland fame, but the slider, a dry-land terrapin, an excellent creature when accompanied with the butter, cream, eggs, sherry, and brandy which are lavished upon him. There were, of course, more old hams, rounds of beef, and a gigantic saddle of Southdown mutton, which Major Lindsay himself carved with a magnificent flourish. The boned turkey was a gem, the work in the case being done by Dr. Markham, the cheery, pleasant-faced village doctor, who, it was popularly reported, in getting the bones out of the turkey used the identical instruments with which he cut off legs and arms. But the doctor's services being in demand by hostesses at Christmas-time, no prejudice existed against either the boned turkey or the doctor.

There were pigeon-pie, wild ducks, chicken salad, and a few other incidentals, to be topped off by ices, custards, jellies, and cakes of innumerable varieties. It took an hour to get through with the supper, and when the guests had feasted and left the dining-room, there was still enough left to feed a couple of regiments.

The musicians had had their supper and a glass of apple toddy, and egg-nog in addition, and were ready again with fiddles and "lap organ" to start the flying feet once more. Betty had more partners than she could accommodate, and told each one the same story in various forms,

punctuated by a sidelong glance, which was Betty's own—that she only wished she could dance with him all the evening. Tom Lindsay, a handsome youngster, who called Betty by her first name and assumed proprietary rights over her, was encouraged to do so by this arch-hypocrite of a girl. But in this Betty only followed the prevailing fashion. All of the university students and young officers present, except Fortescue, found themselves involved in at least half a dozen desperate flirtations, which promised to continue during the whole week, and then never to be heard of again.

It was four o'clock in the wintry Christmas morning before the musicians tuned up for the final Virginia reel. The two lines were formed down the great hall, and extended through the folding doors into the library. The elders sat around, watching, the card-players in the drawing-room giving up their games of old-fashioned whist to watch the dancers. Betty Beverley had the honor of leading off with Major Lindsay, an agile and graceful dancer in spite of his two hundred pounds. Fortescue, with the eye of a strategist, took the least desirable position at the other end of the line, but by this he acquired the privilege of meeting Betty in the middle of the line, swinging her around first by the right hand and then by the left, next by both hands and then *dos-à-dos*, and passing under the arch. The musicians played with the fire and enthusiasm peculiar to their race. The fiddlers wagged their heads, beat time with their feet, flourished their bows, while the youth with the "lap organ" stood up and fairly danced with delight as the strains of "Billy in the Low Grounds" rent the air.

When the two ends of the reel were danced, Major Lindsay and Betty danced down the middle, the Major cutting the pigeon-wing and taking many quaint and curious steps, which were followed by Betty's twinkling feet. Then they danced back again, and began swinging the row of dancers until they had reached the end of the line again. The march followed next, Betty leading the ladies, and the Major leading the men, all clapping time rhythmically with the dashing music. This was gone through religiously with every couple in the reel, and it took an hour to be danced. Then, at last, it finished up in the grand chain, everybody shaking hands with everybody else, and wishing each other "Merry Christmas."

It was still pitch dark in the December morning, although past five o'clock. The carriages were brought up to the door, and the ladies were shot into them, the horses prancing in the freezing air and restless to take the road. Betty was one of the last to leave, as Uncle Cesar had to "wrop up" his fiddle carefully, put it in the case, and carry it tenderly out to the rockaway. Old Whitey came up to the big Doric portico, stepping high and snorting as if he were a colt. Major Lindsay escorted Betty down the steps of the great portico, but, at the foot

Fortescue, bareheaded in the winter darkness, was waiting. He gave Betty's slender hand one last pressure, wrapped her delicate feet up warmly in the blanket, and got a sweet parting glance from the girl's fair eyes before Uncle Cesar called out:

"Gee up, ole hoss!"

Betty leaned back in the rockaway as old Whitey trotted briskly along the frozen road. She was in one of those happy dreams that are the glorious heritage of sweet and twenty. Her mind was divided between the charms of dashing university students and charming young officers, together with speculations as to whether her white muslin gown really would last through Christmas week. There were several alarming rents in it already, for Betty had enjoyed herself very, very much.

Then her thoughts turned to soberer things, such as the way the brave old Colonel stood the translation from Rosehill to Holly Lodge, and the necessity for making both ends meet, and the building of a stable for their one cow. For Betty's outside and inside by no means corresponded. On the outside, she was all laughter and singing and dancing, like a silver fountain in the golden sun. Inside, she was the most level-headed, the most thoughtful, and the most courageous creature in the world. Betty was practical and sentimental, tender and cruel, gay and sad, bold and timorous, and always Betty.

CHAPTER III.

KETTLE AND OTHER THINGS

MEANWHILE, things had happened at Holly Lodge. The Colonel had taken out his violin and played dreamily the old airs, Von Weber's Last Waltz, "Love Not," and "Bygone Hours." At sixty-eight, one has many Christmas days to look back upon. The faithful heart of Aunt Tulip in the kitchen was touched when the delicate strains of the violin floated upon the air.

"Ole Marse, he jes' cipherin'." Ciphering, in the negro language, means brooding with sadness and melancholy.

But then Aunt Tulip's attention was distracted by the new-comer, Kettle. The boy, huddled close to the fire, his hands locked around his knees, his beady black eyes fixed on the blaze, was filled with deep content; he was warm, he had had a good supper, and he had escaped the dangers of the screaming steamboat. Those who had left him behind had not been kind to him, and he had no regrets for them. Suddenly his enjoyment of the *dolce far niente* was rudely interrupted by Aunt Tulip, who herself seldom indulged in the sweet-do-nothing.

"Look a-heah, boy," she said, "I'm agoin' to give you a good washin' and put you to bed. Boys oughter be abed by this time, so they 'goin git in no mo' mischief 'twell to-morrer mornin'."

With that Kettle was ruthlessly seized, his clothes stripped off him, and he was soused in a washtub of warm water, while Aunt Tulip, with a scrub-brush, and soft soap of her own manufacture, scrubbed him from head to foot, including his woolly head. Kettle, who had rather dreaded the unusual experience, enjoyed it before he got through. Then Aunt Tulip, putting a nightgown of her own on him, covered him up in a little pallet she had made upon the floor of her own room, next the kitchen, and in two minutes Kettle had passed into the dreamless sleep of a tired little boy. Then Aunt Tulip began to examine the boy's worn clothes. They were very ragged, and his shoes quite beyond help. But clothes, however ragged, may be washed and mended. So Aunt Tulip, who had worked hard all that day and every day, set herself the task of having something decent for Kettle to put on Christmas morning. She toiled at the washtub while Betty, far off, was dancing, and the Colonel had long since gone to his bedroom up the narrow stairs. After Kettle's poor clothes were washed and ironed, they were hung before the kitchen fire to dry, and then Aunt Tulip, getting out her big work-basket and brass thimble and putting on her horn spectacles, began the task of mending Kettle's rags. She patched and darned industriously, and at last, with a sigh of profound satisfaction, she folded up and laid upon a chair Kettle's clothes, including his jacket and trousers, neatly washed and mended and decent. Nothing could be done with his shoes, except to put some shoe-polish on them, and this she did. The Christmas stars looked down kindly upon the poor negro woman toiling for one of God's poor, and the Christmas angels wafted a benediction down upon her humble head.

When her labor was over, Aunt Tulip lay down to rest for a couple of hours. She knew well enough when Betty would return, and the fire had to be started up in Betty's room, and, after old Whitey had been put in the stable, Uncle Cesar must have his hot coffee and corn-pone. For Aunt Tulip, like many of her humble kind, was a minister of kindness to all around her.

It was six o'clock, but still the world was all inky blackness when the wheels of the rockaway crunched before the door of Holly Lodge. The fire in Betty's room had been stirred into a cheering blaze, and Aunt Tulip was ready to help her out of her simple evening gown.

"I declar', Miss Betty," said Aunt Tulip, "how some folks kin let a ohile go as raggety as that air boy, I doan' see."

Betty's mind came back from officers and students to Kettle.

"We must try and get him some decent clothes, Mammy," she answered, Aunt Tulip having been Betty's mammy in her baby days.

"Anyhow," continued Aunt Tulip, "the boy has got sumpin decent fur Chrismus mornin'. I done washed his clo'es an' mended 'em up the bes' I could."

"And were you washing and ironing and mending all this Christmas night?" asked Betty.

"Well," replied Aunt Tulip, "I did n't mind settin' up an' gittin' the boy's things kinder decent. But, Miss Betty, the boy has got to have a Chrismus stockin'."

"Of course," cried Betty. "You can put some apples and oranges and nuts in it."

"An' Cesar an' me kin give him a quarter apiece todes a new pair of shoes. His shoes ain' nothin' 'tall."

Betty dived into her dressing-table drawer and took out of her little purse a dollar bill.

"And this is from Grandfather, for the shoes, too. He would never forgive us if something was n't put into the boy's stocking from him. Now, what can I think of to give him?"

"He ain' got no collar nor cravat," said Aunt Tulip. "He would look right nice to-morrer if he jes' had a collar and cravat."

Betty was well off in collars, and produced four. Then, unfastening the scarlet ribbon from around her waist, she seized her needle and thimble, and in five minutes had sewed the ribbon into a large and very presentable cravat, and proceeded to fringe out the ends. Aunt Tulip watched her with delighted eyes.

"Lord!" she said, "that chile will be tickled to death when he gits his Chrismus stockin'. An' you know, Miss Betty, I been thinkin' that boy could be mighty useful at Holly Lodge, pickin' up chips and carryin' the wood upstairs and huntin' up the turkeys."

"I think so, too," replied Betty, rolling up the cravat and the collars. "If he is any good, he could save you and Uncle Cesar a great many steps."

Presently, Betty was in her little white bed for a short nap, for she could not think of not being up and dressed on Christmas morning, although she had danced twenty-five miles between eight o'clock in the evening and five in the morning. Aunt Tulip too took what she called her "cat nap," and at eight o'clock on Christmas morning everything was awake and stirring at Holly Lodge. The sun was shining brilliantly, and it was not so desperately cold as the day before. Betty had hopes that the thin layer of snow would melt, so that the scent would lie for the fox-hunt the next morning. She ran downstairs as soon as she was dressed, and found the Colonel standing on the hearth-rug, his back to the fire, and his eyes turned resolutely away from Rose-hill. Betty kissed him all over his face, and commanded him to be cheerful, as everybody should be on Christmas morning. Then Aunt Tulip and Uncle Cesar were called in for their simple gifts, and Kettle appeared with them, his clothes clean and respectable-looking. There was much talk between the Colonel and Uncle Cesar over Christmas days

long before, and the Colonel, whatever his heart might be, carried out to the letter Betty's injunction to be cheerful. The sight of his Christmas stocking and his treasures, the collars and the gorgeous red cravat, and the magnificent prospect of a pair of new shoes, completely overwhelmed Kettle. He could only look first at Betty and then at Aunt Tulip, and say:

"This is the fust Chrismus I ever see; the fust Chrismus I ever see."

"Did n't you ever have a Christmas stocking before, Kettle?" asked Betty.

"Naw, Miss," answered Kettle. "I done heah about 'em, but I ain' never had none befo'."

But Kettle's bliss was further augmented when Aunt Tulip put a standing collar around his neck and tied the flaming red necktie under his chin. All was then swallowed up in Kettle's rapture over his own appearance. He stood before the old-fashioned mirror over the pier table, his head barely reaching the top; his mouth came open as if it were on hinges, his eyes danced in his head, and words failed him. There are moments of rapture when speech is a superfluity, and so it was with Kettle when he beheld himself in his first cravat, and that a large one of brilliant red satin.

"Now, boy," said Aunt Tulip severely, who did not believe in wasting indulgences on boys, "now that Miss Betty and ole Marse done been so good to you, you got to do all you kin to help along. You got to pick up chips an' fotch water an' black ole Marse's shoes an' do everything you know how."

"I cert'n'y will," answered Kettle fervently. And then the divine spirit of gratitude appeared in his eyes, and he said:

"An' I ain' gwine to fergit that you washed my clo'es."

"An' washed you too," replied Aunt Tulip. "An' you got to do it yourself every day, or I'll see to you."

This awful and indefinite threat impressed Kettle with a wholesome fear of the most harmless creature on earth—Aunt Tulip.

Then breakfast was served, and Kettle received his first lessons in bringing in batter-cakes. In the intervals between the relays of hot batter-cakes, Kettle glued his eyes to his own image in the glass with a vanity second only to that of Narcissus.

Of course, the Colonel had to hear all about the party, and who were there, and if the regulation Christmas festivities were thoroughly carried out.

"Once," said the Colonel, "we celebrated Christmas that way at Rosehill, with an unstinted hospitality. Now——"

"Have n't I told you," cried Betty, sternly from across the table, "that you were not to make a single complaint against Fate on Christmas

day? Did n't I tell you yesterday I knew this was going to be the pleasantest Christmas I ever had? So far it certainly has been. The dance last night was the most heavenly thing—my gown is in ribbons, but I can mend it up all right, and put in a couple of new breadths later in the week. And Mr. Fortescue told me he thought that a white muslin gown at Christmas time, with scarlet ribbons and a wreath of geranium leaves, with moss rosebuds, was the most beautiful and poetic costume a girl could wear."

The Colonel's white teeth showed under his trim gray moustache.

"Fortescue knows how to pay compliments, my dear," he said.

"All right," cried Betty. "A man who does n't know how to pay compliments and is n't equal to telling colossal fibs to the girl he is dancing with, is n't the man for me."

When breakfast was over Uncle Cesar brought in the only melancholy news of the day. Old Whitey had gone lame, and there was no going to church that day, nor was it likely that he would be fit to ride the next day at the hunt. Betty sighed deeply. The crust of snow was rapidly disappearing, and the ground would be in good condition for the hunt. However, Betty was of a hopeful nature, and felt sure that a horse would drop down out of the clouds for her to ride.

The Christmas dinner was to be served at the old-fashioned hour of four o'clock, so when breakfast was over and Betty had paid a visit to old Whitey, she went up to her room and, throwing herself upon her bed, began to make up her lost arrears of sleep. The Colonel was downstairs absorbed in his new histories, which Betty had given him for his Christmas gift, and Betty slept peacefully until it was quite three o'clock, and the winter sun was beginning to decline. Then, as she lay awake thinking pleasant thoughts, her door was noiselessly opened, and Kettle appeared above his red cravat, carrying a big bouquet of white roses. He laid the roses down on Betty's pillow, and said:

"The gent'man who fotch 'em is downstairs—Mr. Fortescue."

Betty sat up and buried her face in the fresh roses. She knew them well. They came from the greenhouse at Rosehill, and she herself had taught them to bloom late and luxuriously.

"Tell the gentleman I will be down immediately," she said, and then, running to her mirror, proceeded to make a fetching toilette out of very simple elements. Her well fitting dark blue gown set off her slender figure, and when she came into the sitting-room, carrying her huge bunch of roses, Fortescue, who sat talking to the Colonel, thought she looked like a peach ripening on the southern wall.

"I thank you so much," said Betty sweetly. "I tended the roses in the greenhouse at Rosehill as long as we lived there. We have no greenhouse here, so we could n't bring the rose-bushes with us. But I always had roses for Christmas."

"And I hope you will always have roses for Christmas," replied Fortescue gallantly.

Then they sat and talked gaily together as young people do, of dances and hunting and all of the great affairs of youth, the Colonel putting in a word occasionally. Fortescue was lucky enough to be asked to all the Christmas parties.

"I should like," he said, "to give a party at Rosehill, but I don't know how. I am only a man, you know. I should wish to do it right, but I am afraid I can't make it quite as it ought to be on short notice. Now, next Christmas, if I can get leave, I will have a party, too. That is, if you, Miss Betty, will help me."

The Colonel liked the modesty of this speech, and at once said that Betty would help.

Then the girl told the melancholy story of old Whitey's lameness. Fortunately, Sally Carteret, knowing that old Whitey had to be saved for the hunt, had invited Betty to go with her to the party that evening at Red Plains, which was close by.

"Do you mean," asked Fortescue, "that you are to miss the hunt?"

"I am afraid so," said poor Betty dolefully.

"But that is n't to be thought of," cried Fortescue. "I have several horses at Rosehill, and I can give you a mount. Birdseye, that I rode over here, is the gentlest and kindest horse that ever stepped. Although not a regular hunter, she can get along the road and over the fences all right."

"Oh!" exclaimed Betty, jumping up, "do let me see her! Granddaddy, may I ride Birdseye to-morrow morning?"

The Colonel hesitated a moment.

"I should require, my love," he said, "to see Birdseye. Perhaps she has never had a side-saddle on her, or known what a riding-skirt is."

"We can try her," suggested Fortescue.

Betty ran out into the little hall, and, picking up a red scarf, threw it over her head, calling back to the Colonel:

"Don't you dare, Granddaddy, to come out on the porch. You can see from the window."

Fortescue was not a foot behind Betty, and they both ran to where Birdseye, dancing to keep herself warm, stood under a great holly tree. From the kitchen window peeped a little round, black face.

"We can try Birdseye with that little black boy," said Fortescue. "She would n't hurt a baby."

Betty beckoned to Kettle, who came out willingly enough, his constitutional grin overspreading his face.

"Run to the stable and get a horse-blanket," said Betty, which Kettle proceeded to do, and returned in a couple of minutes.

But Kettle's face suddenly changed when Fortescue, catching him

by the shoulder, wrapped the horse-blanket around him as if it were a skirt, and Betty supplied a couple of hair-pins with which to fasten it. Then Fortescue, flinging the boy on Birdseye's back, put the reins in his hand, saying:

"Now, you little scamp, gallop around the lawn."

But Kettle, his scared eyes nearly bouncing out of his little black face, his grin wholly disappeared, was quite incapable of taking a gallop around the lawn of his own initiative. He clung desperately to the reins, and began to stutter.

"G-g-g-good Gord A'mighty, Miss Betty! I's jes' skeered to death of this heah hoss!"

Birdseye, however, well bred, well behaved, and intelligent, paid no attention to the squirming, frightened burden upon her shapely back. Fortescue, taking her by the bridle, led her to the paling around the little lawn, and then, with a twig broken from a big holly tree, gave her a sharp cut on the flank. Birdseye knew what was expected, and, rising, she made a beautiful standing jump over the paling. At that, Kettle, with a yell, dropped the reins and grabbed the mare around the neck with both arms. Not even this could disturb Birdseye's admirable poise. Fortescue himself made a standing leap over the paling and, running Birdseye around, made her do another beautiful jump over the paling. By that time, not even fear of Fortescue or love of Betty could keep Kettle on Birdseye's back another minute. As soon as she came to a standstill, he tore off the horse-blanket and, dropping to the ground, ran off as fast as his short legs could carry him.

The Colonel, who was watching from the window, tapped his approval on the window-pane. Fortescue then mounted, and, riding off some distance in the field, came back at a swinging gallop, and Birdseye took the paling most beautifully in her stride, flying over it like a bird. Betty immediately fell deeply in love with Birdseye, and declared that she must go upstairs and put on her habit, and test the horse for herself. In a little while, she came down, more bewitching than ever to Fortescue's eyes, in her trim black habit and little beaver hat.

Fortescue, mindful of Colonel Beverley's scrutiny, put Betty on horseback in the old way, by taking her slim foot in his hand, and Betty stiffening her knee and rising into the side-saddle, which had been put on Birdseye's back. Betty did the standing leap beautifully half a dozen times, and then, riding off in the field, turned and came back, and Birdseye made a running leap like the flight of a lapwing. Fortescue had no doubt that Betty was quite safe by her own horsemanship on Birdseye's back. They were so interested in their pastime that they forgot the passing of the hours. The Christmas dinner at Holly Lodge was served at four o'clock, and just before the hour Uncle Cesar came out of the house and said with a courtly bow to Fortescue:

"Ole Marse, he say it is mos' fou' o'clock, an' you mus' come in an' have Chrismus dinner with Miss Betty an' him."

Fortescue demurred a little, meaning all the while to accept. His riding clothes were hardly suitable, he said. But Betty clinched the matter by saying to Uncle Cesar:

"Tell the Colonel that Mr. Fortescue will stay to dinner, and hopes his riding clothes will be excused."

There was just time for Betty to skip upstairs and jump into a little gown of a pale and jocund yellow, with an open neck, around which she hung the Colonel's Christmas gift, the little locket. The elbow sleeves showed her dimpled arms, and with deliberate coquetry she put in her shining hair one of the white roses Fortescue had brought her, and another over her innocent and affectionate little heart. When she entered the sitting-room, which served also as a dining-room, Betty was justly triumphant. She knew that she was looking her best.

There was not much money at Holly Lodge, but Christmas dinners were ridiculously cheap, and some of earth's choicest products lay almost at the door of the little house. Fortescue thought he had never seen so noble a turkey or such captivating oysters, and when the plum pudding was brought in with a sprig of holly stuck in it and surrounded by a sea of fire, Fortescue hypocritically pretended he had never seen anything like it before.

The Colonel grew reminiscent of past Christmas days.

"I recollect one in particular," he said grimly: "the Christmas of '64 in the trenches at Petersburg, when it was snowing and freezing and hailing, and we had nothing to eat, and death and defeat stalked with us. Don't you remember that Christmas, boy?" asked the Colonel of Uncle Cesar.

"Gord knows I does," responded Uncle Cesar fervently.

"That boy," continued the Colonel, indicating the gray-haired Cesar, "was my body-servant during the whole war. He is an arrant coward, and would run away if he thought there was a Yankee within five miles of him."

Uncle Cesar bore this imputation upon his personal courage with a broad grin.

"I war n't no soldier-man, ole Marse," he explained. "I was jes' your body-servant, and I was skeered of Yankees, and I's skeered of 'em now."

At this, Fortescue laughed.

"You need n't be afraid of me, Uncle Cesar," he said.

But Uncle Cesar shook his head.

"Yankees is mighty cu'r'rus. In the war-time, they jes' as soon kill a man as wring a chicken's neck."

"But I must say," added the Colonel, "that although Cesar always

disappeared promptly as soon as we got into a dangerous place, he invariably turned up when the trouble was over, and with something hot for me to eat or something to drink—which he called coffee, and was almost as good.”

“T wuz parched corn, an’ taters cut up an’ roasted. An’ mos’ in gineral, I could find somebody’s cow to milk for ole Marse.”

The Colonel chuckled at this.

“That black rascal, sir,” he said, indicating the faithful and devoted servitor, “could milk a cow into a bottle and never spill a drop. But there were n’t any cows to rob in the trenches around Petersburg that Christmas day of ’64, eh, boy?”

The Colonel’s tone was joking, but in his eyes, as they met those of his gray-haired “boy,” was a wistful expression. The bygone tragedy rose before the old soldier and his “boy.” Once more they saw the pinched faces of the starving soldiers, the scanty portions of miserable food. Once more agonies of cold and hunger, and from the far-off years came back the sullen booming of the cannon, the frightful shriek of the bursting shells, the cracking of bullets. “In the trenches”—the phrase was enough to raise gruesome ghosts and awful phantoms from their bloody graves.

It was Betty who brought the two old men away from sad Christmas memories.

“Well, Granddaddy,” she said, “it’s all over now, thank goodness, and we have everything to be proud of on both sides. I am so glad that I am a soldier’s daughter, and so proud when I can say so.”

At that, Fortescue, who quickly adopted the quaint and old-fashioned customs of people like Colonel Beverley and Betty, rose from the table and gave Betty a military salute, which delighted her beyond words.

When dinner was over, Betty insisted that Fortescue should instruct her in the manual of arms, and, with a broomstick for a gun, Betty went through with the whole manual, to the Colonel’s intense delight.

“By George!” he cried. “She would make a magnificent recruit!”

It was then growing dusk, and the Colonel reminded Betty that it was the usual hour she always sang to her harp for him. Fortescue took the green baize cover off the harp, and Betty played and sang, her graceful figure and lovely, rounded arms making to Fortescue the prettiest picture he had ever seen. She had a sweet, untrained voice, like a bird in the forest, and sang to perfection the old-fashioned, sentimental songs the Colonel loved.

Six o’clock came all too soon, and Fortescue, forced to remember his duties as host, at last reluctantly rose to go. They were, however, to meet in a few hours at the Red Plains ball. As Fortescue galloped along the frozen road between Holly Lodge and Rosehill, he thought he

had never had so pleasant a Christmas day. It was all simple and innocent pleasure, like the pastimes of children, but it was not the less joyous and satisfying on that account. Fortescue came to the conclusion that a great deal of beauty, joy, charm, goodness, and merriment, and even the sublime thing called "happiness," might be found in a little brown house with one sitting-room and one chimney, and on a place with one cow and one horse.

CHAPTER IV.

LOVE AND THE CHASE

WHILE Betty was dressing, with Aunt Tulip as lady's maid, for the Red Plains party, the subject of Kettle was under discussion.

"That chile," said Aunt Tulip, "went an' hide hisself as soon as he got offen Mr. Fortescue's hoss, an' when I went to hunt fur him, if you believe me, Miss Betty, I foun' him 'way up in the lof' over the kitchen, trimblin' like a leaf, an' he would n't come down 'twell he see Mr. Fortescue had done rode away. Then he tell Cesar he could milk, an' he tooken the bucket an' went out an' milk ole Bossy as good as ever you see a cow milked in your life, an' he brung in enough wood fur the whole house, an' help Cesar to feed ole Whitey. That boy is mighty industr'ous."

This was encouraging news, and induced Betty to think that Kettle would certainly be worth his keep.

At half past eight, Sally Carteret, in the big family carriage, came for Betty, and the two girls drove over to Red Plains. The ball was a replica of the dance at Marrowbone. It is not often in life that one can live over so much as a single hour of happiness, but Betty lived over a whole evening of joy. There was Fortescue, who claimed her hand ruthlessly for many dances, and his brother officers, who were scarcely less fascinating to Betty, and the University students, who assumed great intimacy upon short acquaintance, and old friends, with whom she had danced at dancing school. And there was the same merriment, and the same music—Isaac Minkins and Uncle Cesar with their fiddles, and the colored youth with his "lap organ"—and the same supper, and the same egg-nog, and the same songs, and the same hearty Christmas spirit. The dance, though, did not last so late, as the hunt would begin early in the morning, and Betty was back at Holly Lodge and in bed by two o'clock. She had warned Aunt Tulip not to disturb herself so early to make a fire for Betty to dress by, but to send Kettle. At half past five, Kettle knocked at Betty's door, and in two minutes a gorgeous fire called Betty from her bed. At six o'clock in the wintry morning, just as the girl was pulling on her gauntlets, she heard the tramp of horses' hoofs under her window. Uncle Cesar had the side-saddle ready,

and when Betty went downstairs Fortescue was tightening the girths on Birdseye. As the Colonel was not there to watch, Fortescue, in the darkness, took Betty's slender waist in his hands and swung her, in the modern fashion, into the saddle. Although it was still cold, the icy grip had moderated, and the ground was clear. They galloped along in the ghostly darkness, saying little, but with a delightful feeling of nearness and aloneness.

The day was breaking when they dismounted before the great portico at Bendover. The huntsmen were gathering rapidly, and there were several ladies to join the hunt. Negro boys were leading the steaming horses up and down, while the huntsmen passed into the hospitable house. Breakfast was smoking on the table, and there was a constant procession of hot coffee from the kitchen, with the inevitable five kinds of bread which Virginia hospitality imperatively requires for breakfast. There were so many dishes that the long table would not accommodate them, and there was a semicircle of oysters, sausage, deviled bones, and other substantial around the broad open hearth. The breakfast, though plentiful, was hurried, so that the start could be made before the sun dried the rime off the ground. Everybody laughed and talked and nobody listened. In half an hour they were crowding out upon the lawn to mount. As it was a Christmas hunt, every horse carried in his headstall a sprig of holly berries. Of the half-dozen girls present, each had her special cavalier, Fortescue, of course, being the escort of Betty on her new mount. The hounds, impatient to be off, yelped fretfully as they trotted about with their noses to the ground, sniffing eagerly. The horses, knowing what was up, were keen to stretch their legs. The quarry that was to be chased that day was a very astute old red fox, which had devastated many chicken-coops in the smaller homesteads in the highlands, as the slightly rolling country beyond the river shore was called.

At last the hunt was off for a screeching run. About four miles from Bendover, Rattler, the Nestor of the pack of hounds, caught the scent, and, lifting his head, gave one short, loud yelp of triumph, and then dashed away, making straight for a straggling skirt of woods. There was a rough cart-road through it, and along this the huntsmen galloped, the dogs crying close to them. Fortescue rode close to Betty's pommel. Birdseye maintained her character, and Betty thought she had never known so good a mount. It had been Fortescue's expectation that Betty would be merely a spectator of the hunt, but with such a mount as Birdseye under her Betty rode straight and followed the hounds. The scent lay across the open fields and straggling woodlands, and was not particularly rough, but Betty took all that came in her way. Birdseye was naturally a beautiful jumper, and, like many horses, took to the sport with joy. Fortescue admired Betty's lithe figure on the galloping

horse, her delicate cheeks deeply flushed, and the little vagrant tendrils of hair, escaped from her filmy veil, streaming upon the air.

There was a roaring run of an hour, and then, in the midst of an open place in the woods, the scent was lost. The huntsmen pulled up, and the hounds, at fault, rushed whimpering from one spot to another. The horses were breathed, but Birdseye's wind, like everything else about her, was admirable, and she was impatient to be off again. After half an hour of uncertainty, the hounds running hither and yon, the trail was again struck, and the whole pack, led by Rattler, went shrieking on their way, in full cry. There was another hour's hard run, and then, close to a little farmhouse, and on the edge of the poultry yard where the red fox had found his prey, he met the doom of justice. The dogs closed in upon him, and although the fox, vicious to the last, snarled and bit furiously, the day of vengeance was at hand. At that moment every huntsman put spurs to his horse, that he might be first in at the death, but to Fortescue this honor came. The master of the hunt rode up and dismounted. There was no ceremony of throwing his whip upon the ground, for the foxes were really pests, and were meant to be destroyed. The scoundrel fox by that time lay dead upon the ground, and the master handed his knife to Fortescue, who cut off the tail, a splendid brush, thick and long. Betty's heart beat as she rode up with the others. The master was on the ground, patting and encouraging the dogs. Fortescue was also on the ground. The presentation of the brush could not take place until it had been washed and prepared, but a word or two and a look from Fortescue's laughing eyes conveyed to Betty that she was to receive the honor.

It was now after ten o'clock, and, although they had ridden a good fifteen miles, much of it had been in a circle, and they were not more than five miles from Bendover. Sally Carteret led the procession back to Bendover, along the country roads, in the clear wintry noon. The farmers and their wives came running out to their gates to know if the fox was killed, and rejoiced to know that he was dead on the very scene of his iniquities.

The sharp air and the exciting exercise had fired the blood of all. They laughed and sang, and the gentlemen complimented the ladies upon their pluck, and got compliments in return. Fortescue thought that the clock of the centuries had turned back—it was so quaint, so old-fashioned. The modern, eager, bustling, anxious world was forgotten; it was like the hunting and hawking of the sixteenth century.

The cavalcade rode onto the lawn at Bendover soon after twelve o'clock. Other guests had arrived by that time, and then was served the real hunt breakfast. The hunting people had the keen appetites that are bred by five hours in the saddle on a wintry day, and swarmed merrily into the dining-room, where the long table was again set out

with the inevitable deviled turkey, oysters, old hams, and all the seductions of a Virginia hunt breakfast. Everybody laughed and talked and nobody listened. When at last breakfast was over, the brush, which had been cleaned and rudely mounted in a wooden splint, was brought in, and Fortescue in a little speech presented it to Betty. Then somebody began the old hunting song of "John Peel," which accompanies the ceremony of presenting the brush, and a rousing chorus rang out—it is easy to start a chorus at Christmas-time in Virginia, especially when the memory of John Peel is recalled at a Christmas hunt.

"D'ye ken John Peel, d'ye ken John Peel,
With his horse and his hounds in the morning?
His view-halloo will waken the day,
Or the fox from his lair in the morning."

Sally Carteret went to the piano in the drawing-room and began to play a waltz. That was enough. In half a minute every girl in the party was waltzing with her cavalier, in the big uncarpeted hall. The girls who had ridden to the hounds tucked up their short riding-skirts and danced energetically, for a Virginia girl is born and lives dancing. Of course Fortescue had the first waltz with Betty, and saw in her eyes a shy kindness that thrilled him. When Sally Carteret had done her duty at the piano, another girl took her place conscientiously, and gave Sally her chance with the gentlemen, especially Sheldon, one of the young officers who were guests at Rosehill, and who had developed an admiration for Sally scarcely inferior to Fortescue's for Betty Beverley.

The dancing kept up for an hour or two, but as there was a ball ahead for that night, and for every other night that week, the party dispersed by three o'clock. Some went home, others were quartered in the neighborhood, for the Virginia houses were always wide open to guests for the night as well as for the day.

Betty, with the fox-brush fastened to her pommel, rode back in triumph to Holly Lodge, escorted by Fortescue and his three guests. When they reached the little brown house, it was nearly four o'clock. The Colonel hobbled out with his stick to greet Betty, and afar off down the little lane Betty saw him, and waved the brush at him triumphantly. When the party rode up to the little porch, Fortescue flung himself off his horse and assisted Betty.

"See, Granddaddy!" cried Betty, running up the steps and shaking the brush at the Colonel. "Mr. Fortescue won it and gave it to me."

"Most complimentary of Mr. Fortescue," said the Colonel, giving a splendid military salute to Fortescue.

He was glad that his little granddaughter had received the compliment, because, being so much older and more worldly wise than Betty, he understood more what the fall meant from Rosehill to Holly

Lodge. But the kind and hospitable county people saw no difference, and Betty Beverley of Holly Lodge received the same attentions as Betty Beverley of Rosehill.

The Colonel invited the young officers in to have a toddy, to which they promptly agreed, eating and drinking and dancing being obligations of a high order in that community. The Colonel, standing grandly, glass in hand, gave his favorite toast:

"Gentlemen, accept the assurances of my distinguished consideration."

Then, with many promises to meet again that evening, and engagements for dances, Fortescue and his friends mounted and rode away, and Betty, after telling the Colonel the incidents of the hunt, went up to her little room to catch a few hours of sleep; for sleep had to be caught at odd times during Christmas week.

Again that night and every night was a dance, each a repetition of the other, for there was not much room for variety, and the same resources were at the command of all. Fortescue, imbibing the hearty spirit of the community, longed, as he had said at Holly Lodge, to have a ball at Rosehill, but a certain delicacy and tenderness toward Betty and the Colonel hindered him. He did not like to assume too quickly the rôle of the master of Rosehill, and, then, a dream was dawning upon him of a ball at Rosehill, where Betty should be the chatelaine and receive with him. They made great strides toward intimacy, and once in the maze of the last waltz before daybreak Fortescue chose to forget the "Miss" to Betty's name and in her ear called her "Betty." Betty pretended not to hear it, but it thrilled her from head to foot.

Fortescue was no laggard in love, but he had the chivalrous, old-fashioned notion that a girl was to be courted, and that he had to show his devotion in other ways than by many dances with Betty and visits to Holly Lodge before he could dare to ask Betty for the royal treasure of her love. Perhaps, he thought, in six months, by showing her unvarying attention and remembrance, he might dare to speak the winged word, and possibly Betty might then condescend to listen to him. For Fortescue, in a simple, manly way, was as unsophisticated as Betty. Moreover, he had a deadly fear of the Colonel, and considered that he had entered upon a regular campaign, instead of merely attempting a sortie upon the enemy.

On the afternoon before Fortescue's leave was up, he proposed a skating party upon the frozen river. There were few skaters among the girls, for the river and ice-ponds were not frozen often enough to incline them to the sport. Betty, however, could skate prettily, especially with Fortescue's arm to support her. They were in full sight of the windows of Holly Lodge, the Colonel, who knew the ice in that latitude was treacherous, keeping his eye upon the figures darting back

and forth upon the river. Betty, in a little red hood, was bewitching. Sally Carteret was the only other girl skater, and they had so many cavaliers that it was difficult to have a private word with any.

Late in the afternoon, Fortescue and his friends had to take the steamboat which had so frightened Kettle, on the greater river, where the channel was kept open. The parting with Betty was supposed to occur on the river-bank, when Betty took the path to the little brown house, and Fortescue went to Rosehill to start for the landing. Fortescue had time, however, to escort the girl to the edge of the little lawn at Holly Lodge. They talked of the merry, idle, pleasant nothings which make up the staple of youth, until they reached the edge of the lawn. The Colonel, narrowly watching his one ewe lamb, saw only Fortescue's low bow, his hat in his hand, and knew nothing of the look in his eyes, and the tender pressure of Betty's hand, and his brief, significant words.

"I would n't go," he said, "if my leave were not up; but I am a soldier, and a soldier must obey orders. Promise that you won't forget me."

It was just at the hour that one week before Betty had landed from the table in Fortescue's arms, but in that time a new heaven and a new earth had revealed themselves to both of them. Betty was a constitutional and incurable coquette, but deep in her heart she was the soul of sincerity.

"I won't forget you," she said softly, and Fortescue, turning and walking rapidly back to Rosehill, felt a profound satisfaction, a delicious confidence, that was in itself happiness. How faithful was Betty to the gallant old Colonel! This reflection brought some perplexities into Fortescue's mind, but he dismissed them, as sturdy young soldiers of twenty-five can throw out of doors unwelcome guests in the guise of unwelcome thoughts.

CHAPTER V.

THE DREAM OF LOVE

THE Christmas festivities closed with a bang, the visitors departed, and the county settled down to dullness between the new year and the springtime. Those of the young people who could went away to the cities for the gay season. Betty Beverley was left very much alone, but this she did not mind. Indeed, it was rather a respite to her. Betty, like all her kind, had a heart, and was brimming over with emotions. Until that Christmas-time, her heart and her emotions had been her sport, and she had gone upon her cruel path distributing smiles and down-cast glances and pretty phrases impartially, among many admirers. But the coquette always comes to grief at last, and is throttled when the great master passion awakes. Betty was still coquettish to all the world

except to Fortescue. It is true he had not asked her outright to marry him, but Betty rather liked the graduated steps toward the ultimate heights of joy. Being a confident creature, she had no doubt that Fortescue was hers, but she was quite willing to put off the time when the unseen bonds should become the visible chain. For these Southern coquettes develop naturally into devoted and adoring wives, with no eyes for any man but one.

There had been glorious winter weather up to New Year, but within a week the January storms set in, and for two months there were sleet and snow. The little brown house was shut in, and there was little passing back and forth among the county people. The bad weather kept Betty at home many Sundays from the old Colonial church, with its venerable rector. The Colonel's rheumatism was much encouraged by the stormy season, and he too was house-bound. In this time of solitude, Betty lived in two worlds, one the narrow walls of Holly Lodge, and the other the great and splendid world of the imagination, the Arcady of youth and love. As she looked out of her dormer window toward Rosehill, a mysterious smile shone upon her speaking face as she saw herself once more the mistress of the fine old house. It is true there was an obstacle to be got over. This was Fortescue's profession, because he had told her how a soldier was sent hither and yon. Betty was the last girl in the world to ask a man to give up his profession, and, most of all, the profession of arms, but youth and inexperience can rearrange, in theory, the pawns upon the chessboard of life. Fortescue kept up an active siege. Every week came flowers from him, or a book, or a box of bonbons, something to remind Betty of his existence. Constantly, little white notes were written by Betty, thanking him, and with a word or two of deeper meaning. Betty reckoned, as a certainty, that in the spring Fortescue would return with the officers who were to make the military survey. There would be at least a dozen officers, so Fortescue had told Betty, and they were to have a camp on the Colonel's land, only five miles away, and although there would be much work, there would also be a little play.

As Betty looked out of the window on the wintry scene, she imagined it in the first bloom of the early spring, the leaden skies turned to a sapphire blue, the frozen earth all brown and green and odoriferous, the naked branches of the trees and shrubs in their first sweet budding, and the silver river dancing in the sun. Betty was a busy little soul, and had not much time for reverie, particularly as she was hard at work on her summer clothes, making dainty little muslin frocks for herself, which she could do very well. But there was a magic hour in her own little room after she was ready for bed, when the candles were out and only the scarlet and golden glory of the firelight shone upon her. Then, Betty in a smart little rose-colored dressing gown, which was the pride

of her heart, would huddle against the dormer window that looked toward Rosehill, and think thoughts and dream dreams.

It was, on the whole, a happy, though solitary, winter, and a very comfortable one to others at Holly Lodge, besides Betty. The comfort was to a great degree brought about by Kettle. The boy not only picked up chips, and made the fires, and churned, and milked the one cow, but was helpful at every turn to Uncle Cesar and Aunt Tulip. The first thing had been to provide him with some warm clothes, and by the united efforts of Betty and Aunt Tulip this had been accomplished. Then, one bitter day, when there was nobody to go for the mail to the village post-office, two miles away, Kettle, without saying a word to anybody, slipped off. He knew that Betty, whom he adored, was always looking for letters, and Kettle, in his little heart, determined that she should not look in vain that day. He was missed, and Aunt Tulip resigned herself to the belief that the boy had run away again, carrying with him a much better outfit than that with which he had arrived. But Aunt Tulip's unjust suspicions were falsified when in an hour or two Kettle turned up again with the Colonel's weekly newspaper and a letter and a large box of sweets for Betty, from a source which she knew very well. Aunt Tulip gave Kettle a wiggling for "runnin' off 'thout tellin' nobody," but he was merely admonished not to go again without giving notice. The expedition, however, turned out to be very profitable for Kettle, as the keeper of the country store, who was also the postmaster, had engaged Kettle in conversation, and had ended by presenting him with two shirts of a gaudy pink, and a cap, which saved Kettle's one hat for Sundays.

Aunt Tulip was a pessimist on the subject of boys, and was always expecting an outbreak of depravity on Kettle's part. The form in which this came was altogether unusual. Kettle loved music, and whatever he might be doing, if he heard the strains of the Colonel's violin, or especially Betty's touch upon the harp in the sitting-room, it would have been necessary to chain him up to keep him away. He would sit on a little cricket in a corner, his black, beady eyes full of rapture, and his mouth one vast grin. Kettle was in a heaven of delight when the Colonel, of evenings, tuned up his violin, and, sending for Uncle Cesar, "ole Marse" and his "boy" would make sweet, old-time music between them. In a little while, however, Kettle began to long that he too might call the soul of music forth from the strings. On the rare occasions when the Colonel was able to go out for a walk, or when he was taking his afternoon nap more soundly than usual, Kettle would creep to the fiddle-case, and, opening it, would let his little black hand wander among the strings, and, bending his ear down, he would listen as if it were the music of the spheres. Uncle Cesar caught him at this one day, and, seizing him by the collar, gave him a shaking which made his

teeth rattle. Kettle shrieked, and Betty came running into the kitchen expecting to find a tragedy in progress.

"Miss Betty," said Uncle Cesar, "this heah impident little black nigger has been openin' ole Marse' fiddle-box an' mine, and pickin' at the strings, an' I kinder believe he has been a-pickin' at the strings of your harp, Miss Betty. Did you ever heah of such owdaciousness sence Gord made you, Miss Betty?"

"No, I never did," answered Betty promptly. And then she said sternly to Kettle, with an accusing forefinger:

"Remember, Kettle, if ever I catch you meddling with the harp or the violin, I will give you a good switching, myself. Do you understand?"

"Yessum," answered Kettle, with solemn emphasis.

This engagement was reinforced by Uncle Cesar's promising him an additional switching in case he did not get his deserts in the first one.

For a week or two, Kettle was able to keep his fingers off the harp-strings and out of the fiddle-box, but one morning, when the winter sun was shining, and Colonel Beverley had gone out for a little turn on the lawn, Kettle fell from grace. Suspicious sounds were heard in the sitting-room. Aunt Tulip softly opened the door, and there was Kettle down on his knees before the fiddle-case, picking away in rapture. Aunt Tulip grabbed him, and called wrathfully to Uncle Cesar to go and get a switch. Uncle Cesar, full of vengeance, went out and returned with what might better be described as a sapling, it was so long and stout. Just then Betty entered the room, and Aunt Tulip told her of Kettle's felonious acts.

"Of course, Aunt Tulip, you must give him a whipping," said Betty positively.

The whole party then marched into the kitchen, and Kettle was ordered to take off his jacket, which he did with much natural reluctance. Then, Aunt Tulip, flourishing the long switch around, proceeded to harangue Kettle indignantly:

"Ain't you 'shamed yourself, you good-for-nothin' little nigger, after all ole Marse an' Miss Betty done for you, ter sneak in the settin'-room, an' be ruinin' ole Marse' fiddle-strings, an' meddlin' with Miss Betty's harp? I tell you what, boys has got ter git switched sometimes, an' I'm agwine ter give you a switchin' this day you will recomember to the Day of Judgment."

With this awful preamble, Aunt Tulip raised the switch, and Kettle, before a single stroke had descended, burst into howls. Aunt Tulip's hand faltered.

"I declar', Miss Betty," she said apologetically, pausing with the uplifted switch in the air, "it's mighty hard ter give a switchin' ter a chile as ain't got no father nor mother; but Kettle cert'n'y ought to have it, an' I think Cesar kin give it ter him better 'n I kin."

With this, the switch was handed over to Uncle Cesar. Kettle redoubled his yells. The prospect of the switch in Uncle Cesar's stalwart arm was indeed terrifying. Uncle Cesar, to make the ceremony more impressive, took off his coat and rolled up his shirt-sleeves, and lifted the switch on high. But it did not come down on Kettle's back when it was expected. Uncle Cesar's hand began to tremble.

"It's mighty cur'rus, Miss Betty," said Uncle Cesar, hesitating and rubbing his arm, "but I kinder got my hand out with switchin' boys, an' the rheumatiz is right bad this mornin'. Anyhow, I reckon I better put off his heah switchin' 'twell the rheumatiz gits better."

"It can't be put off, Uncle Cesar," answered Betty decisively. "The truth is, Aunt Tulip and you are squarmish about giving Kettle what he deserves. Now, I believe in discipline, and if you promise a boy a switching, you ought to give it to him. So give me the switch."

The instrument of torture was duly handed over to Betty. Kettle suddenly stopped his wailings, and his mouth came wide open as if it were on hinges. Betty, too, by way of nerving herself for the task, began to give Kettle a lecture.

"Now, Kettle," she said sternly, "your conduct has been perfectly outrageous. You were told not to touch my harp or the violins."

"I know it, Miss Betty," whimpered Kettle, his arm to his eyes, "but them fiddles, they jes' seem a-callin' an' a-callin' ter me fur ter come an' play on 'em, an' that air harp—Miss Betty, ef I could play a chune on one of them fiddles, I'd ruther do it—I'd ruther do it——"

Kettle's imagery failed him in finding a simile strong enough.

"But you were told not to touch them, and you disobeyed. Now you are going to get a whipping for it," replied Betty, catching her under lip in her little white teeth, and raising once more the five-foot and inch-thick switch. When it had been lifted above him before, Kettle had bawled loudly, but at the sight of Betty standing on tiptoe with the switch grasped in both hands, Kettle's open mouth suddenly extended in a huge grin, and he burst into a subdued guffaw. In vain, Betty held the switch aloft and tried to screw up courage to bring it down on Kettle. It was quite impossible with Kettle grinning before her and chuckling openly. Betty herself suddenly burst out laughing, and dropped the switch.

"The only thing I can think of to do with you, Kettle," she said, "is to teach you to play the fiddle."

At that, Kettle's mouth, if anything, came wider open than ever.

"Lord, Miss Betty!" he cried, "does you mean you is a-gwine to put the bow in my hand, and let me scrape them strings with it?"

"Yes, indeed," answered Betty. "I will teach you your notes, and Uncle Cesar will show you how to handle the bow."

From that day began Kettle's musical education. The Colonel,

sitting in his great chair, would smile at Betty with the music-book, instructing Kettle in the notes which she knew. Kettle was extremely stupid at learning his notes, and Betty frequently promised him the long delayed switching for his negligence. But as soon as Uncle Cesar took charge of him and put the bow in his hand, Kettle learned with amazing rapidity.

"I am afraid, my dear," the Colonel would say to Betty on these occasions, "that Kettle can master the concrete better than the abstract. However, he must learn his notes."

Kettle progressed so fast that in the course of a couple of months he enjoyed the privilege of playing a second to the Colonel's fiddle. The boy's arms were barely long enough to use a grown-up fiddle. As he played, he shuffled about in rapture, and Betty taught him to do the back-step and double shuffle while he played. It was a new amusement in the Colonel's quiet life to have Kettle come into the sitting-room in the evening after supper, and play and dance for him, while Kettle enjoyed the performance beyond words.

The winter slipped away, and in March the little camp was to be formed, and the officers were to remain for a couple of months. The thought of seeing Fortescue again, brought the eloquent blood to Betty's delicate cheeks and a new brilliance to her sparkling eyes. The spring came early in that latitude, and the first day of March was deliciously mild. Betty was at work in the little old-fashioned garden of Holly Lodge. She had brought with her from Rosehill many rose-bushes and a bed of cowslips and violets. With a garden trowel in her hand, her skirts pinned up, and a red Tam o' Shanter pushed back from her forehead, Betty was busy digging about the rose-bushes. Kettle had been of the greatest service in making the garden. That morning he had been sent to the post-office for the mail, and Betty was watching out for him: he was likely to bring her a letter from Fortescue. Presently, Kettle appeared crossing the little lawn, and passed through the garden gate. His shrewd little mind had discovered that when he delivered to Betty a large, square envelope, addressed in a certain masculine handwriting, Betty was sure to smile and open the letter quickly. This happened again, but Kettle was amazed to see Betty's dimple suddenly disappear, her bright eyes suddenly grow sombre, and the color drop swiftly out of her cheeks. She read the letter through slowly, and then stood with her eyes fixed upon the ground and her lips trembling. Fortescue was not coming with the other officers. He had just received orders to the other side of the continent. He had asked for twenty-four hours' leave, which would give him a chance to see Betty for about two hours the next day. He did not know, however, whether he could get permission in time to make the boat or not, but he would do it if mortal man could. He hoped Betty would understand why he came. The girl

knew well enough what he meant, but the thought of three thousand miles between them for a long time, brought its pang. The fair day suddenly lost its beauty for Betty. The vagrant breeze seemed to sigh farewell, and the sapphire sky above her would not be long the sky above Fortescue. She was roused from her painful dream by Kettle's voice, and realized that the boy had stood motionless next her for a long time.

"Miss Betty," he asked, "what's the matter with you?"

"A great deal is the matter with me," sighed Betty, putting the letter in her pocket, and resuming her digging and trimming. What did it matter whether the roses bloomed that June or not? And the violets and the cowslips could not console her for Fortescue.

Betty remained a long time in the garden that morning. Kettle followed her about like a dog, every now and then asking anxiously:

"Miss Betty, don't you feel no better?"

In spite of her sadness and disappointment, Betty was roused out of herself by Kettle's sympathy.

"I don't feel any better now, Kettle," she said. "Perhaps I shall to-morrow."

But although Betty might show her chagrin and despondency before Kettle and the rose-bushes and the violets and the cowslips, she had no intention whatever of letting anybody else see it. When she looked up and saw the Colonel coming out to take the air, pacing up and down the garden walk in the sunny spring day, Betty, who was a clever actress, put on her most smiling aspect. As the Colonel limped up and down for half an hour, his arm on Betty's shoulder, he thought he had never known her more cheerful. She told him quite naturally that she had had a letter from Mr. Fortescue, and that he was ordered to California, but, if possible, he would be at Rosehill the next day for a short time, and would come over to see them. The Colonel's emotions concerning Fortescue were very badly mixed and perplexing even to himself. He was not so selfish as to forget Betty's happiness, and Fortescue was a fine, upstanding young fellow, quite after the Colonel's heart. But there was something calculated to daunt the brave soul of the old man in the thought of his few remaining years without Betty. He had been called upon to resign the love of his youth, his only son, and Rosehill, and now this little one—— At the thought, the Colonel said to himself, as he had done many times in years past, amid the hail of bullets, with cannon thundering in his ears, or in snow and sleet and starvation, "Courage! Courage!"

All that day, Betty was in a dream. She knew very well the answer she would give Fortescue, but suddenly she looked into the stern face of Life, and saw what those dreams meant. How could she leave Holly Lodge and the Colonel and Aunt Tulip and Uncle Cesar and Kettle, and the young chickens, just hatched? Life was a practical affair with

Betty, but, unfortunately, sentiment and emotion were strong within her. She did not know how the next twenty-four hours passed, except that her eyes continually swept the narrow lane that led to the little gate of Holly Lodge. She would rather see Fortescue in the garden, and therefore dressed herself in her little pale yellow gown, and put on a great straw hat, trimmed with little yellow buds and green leaves, that was worthy of a dryad. The air was warm and soft at midday, and Betty was walking up and down the garden path, watching, watching, watching, and at last, just as she had turned her back to the gate and was walking the length of the little garden path, Fortescue was at her side. He looked so bronzed, so soldierly, so much the man, that Betty gave a little gasp of delight. There was a tall box-hedge in the little old garden which screened the walk from the windows of the house, so that Fortescue could take Betty's hand and be unseen as they walked up and down in the pleasant spring noon. Then Fortescue told her all: that he had received his unexpected orders and must go, that it wrung his heart to leave her, but that he was hers forever, and that though his body might be in the far Northwest, his heart and soul would be at Holly Lodge. Betty's eyes made answer to Fortescue, and her lips spoke the winged words that gave her to her lover. A pair of robins beginning housekeeping in the grape arbor at the end of the walk sang and trilled rapturously as they watched the lovers.

There could be no question of their being married immediately, as Fortescue would be on the wing for the next four months, and he knew nothing of his new station or duties, except that both were trying and the conditions unsuited to a woman. But later, after he had seen what the conditions were, perhaps he might take Betty with him.

"I am asking a great deal of you, Betty," he said. "The wife of a junior officer has to go from place to place, to be uprooted constantly. It is true that I am lucky in having money enough to make it as easy as it can be made, but it is hard, hard, all the same. But if you love me——"

Betty said one little word which settled that point, but her eyes were grave.

"How can I leave my grandfather?" she asked suddenly.

"You need not leave him," promptly replied Fortescue. "We can carry the old gentleman and the whole outfit around with us."

But Betty shook her head.

"You don't know my grandfather," she said. "He has a very independent spirit. How could a man who has lived his life for so many years go from place to place? He must live and die here."

"He can go and live at Rosehill, if he wants to," answered Fortescue, who was disposed to brush away all obstacles. "My father is pretty good to me, and he will do anything I ask him, about the place."

"But Granddaddy would never consent to be a pensioner on anybody, I am sure," continued Betty, with a doleful little smile. "So we can't be married until you are retired, thirty-six years from now."

Fortescue scouted this proposition, but he saw in Betty Beverley something that gave him pain and yet made him proud. This was a fixed loyalty to her duty. It was that which made Fortescue, who could have led a life of idle luxury, lead the stern life of a soldier. He would not have loved Betty half so well if she had shown a willingness to cast off the old ties for the new. But, as Fortescue told himself and Betty, there are a great many troublesome questions coming up all the time concerning human beings, horses, cows, gardens, and everything else. There was one small scrap of comfort. It was,

"And the only thing is, Betty," he said, "that we shall love each other and stand by each other, and some way out of it will be found."

It was possible that in December, when the great Northwest was snow-bound, Fortescue might get a month's leave. If he came to Virginia and back, it would give him a week, perhaps ten days, at Rosehill. Of course, he would have to spend a day or two with his father and brothers, but they could meet him somewhere on the way.

"I've got a fine old dad," he said, "and he is always saying that the men of to-day have no devotion to women; so the old gentleman would n't think me game if I did n't spend most of my leave with you, eh, Betty?"

It seemed to them but a little space of time that they had been in the garden together, when Fortescue, suddenly looking at his watch, found that he had barely time to go into the house and speak to the Colonel and then catch the boat at the landing. The friendly hedge that had screened the lovers witnessed the last throbbing kiss. Outwardly serene, but inwardly palpitating, they went quickly into the house. Betty had warned Fortescue, as they ran down the garden path, to say nothing to her grandfather.

"It will only distress him and keep him awake at night, and I will choose a time to tell him."

"All right," answered Fortescue. "Just give me notice, and I will write him the conventional letter. But to tell you the truth, Betty, I would just as soon be out of the way when the Colonel turns those pathetic eyes on you, as you talk about getting married."

Colonel Beverley had seen so many young men walking up and down the garden path with Betty, and had watched the rise and fall of so many flirtations, that he attached little consequence to Fortescue's visit. He was sorry that the young officer would not be among the party in the camp, and added with a grim smile that no doubt the young ladies in the county would miss him extremely and would be forced to take comfort in other second lieutenants, just as it had been in his day. Then

with best wishes and a hand-shake, and a soft pressure of Betty's fingers, Fortescue was gone.

"A fine, personable youngster," said the Colonel to Betty. "Very creditable of him, serving in the army, and he the son of a rich man. He could be, if he wished, of the idle rich."

"If he were an idle rich man, I don't think I should care much about him," said Betty significantly.

Up to that point, life had been the simplest of propositions to Betty Beverley, but from that day it became painfully complex. She had thought but little and spoken less of the great word "duty," but she had in her the soul of the soldier, and her duty loomed large before her, as it did before Fortescue. On this point their understanding was perfect. If Fortescue had been ordered into action, Betty would have buckled his sword about his waist and bidden him, with a smile, go. In the same way, when Betty spoke of her duty to stay, Fortescue said not one word to make her a traitor. But they were both young and full of hope and love, and had transcendent confidence in the future. Everything would come right, was the easy conviction of both.

Betty waited a few days to see if Fortescue's visit had roused any latent suspicions in the Colonel's mind, but, seeing it had not, one day when it was soft and mild as on the day of days when Fortescue had told her of his love, she walked in the little garden with the Colonel and told him all.

"But I don't mean to desert you, Granddaddy," she said firmly. "I don't know how it is coming out, and neither does Jack"—for by that time Fortescue had become "Jack" to Betty—"but I hate a deserter, you know."

"It would n't be desertion, my dear," said the Colonel. "And it would be a base thing of me to spoil your life, my little Betty. But, as you say, a way will be found. Don't let us trouble about it until Christmas, then, as you say, Fortescue will try to get a leave that will give him a week at Rosehill, and we shall see. I think perhaps I could get on pretty well at Holly Lodge with Cesar and Tulip and Kettle."

"Do you mean," cried Betty indignantly, "that you could get on pretty well without me? Oh, what a wicked old grandfather you are!"

"But you will come to see me sometimes," said the Colonel, anxious to find a way.

In due time the letter to the Colonel came from Fortescue, and the Colonel answered it in his dignified, old-fashioned manner. He did not wish and would not permit himself to be a bar to his granddaughter's happiness. But after a time, when their affection had been tested, he would give his consent to the marriage.

The officers came, and the camp was pitched, and much work was done. Likewise, much eating, drinking, dancing, riding, boating, and

picnicking with the county people. It was the old story of Christmas week transferred to spring. Betty appeared to be as keen over the lieutenants as Sally Carteret or any girl in the county, nor did she feel any qualms of conscience when two second lieutenants each told her at different times that he could not live without her. Betty was a little unfeeling toward her admirers, and her tears were but crocodile tears when she told the lieutenants that she could not leave her grandfather—but for that— Here Betty broke down prettily, and the lieutenants were in despair. But they speedily recovered from their disappointment and found other outlets for their affections. Betty, the trifler, was serious enough, however, where Fortescue was concerned.

The spring melted into summer, and on a day black for Sally Carteret and the other gay young things in the county the camp was broken and the officers departed. Luckily, though, it was at the season when the University students returned to the county, bringing many of their fellow students with them, so that there was balm in Gilead. As for Betty, she was quite willing to play with the University students, as she had with the second lieutenants. But deep down in her heart they mattered little. There was but one man for her, and that was Lieutenant John Hope Fortescue.

The earth seemed brightening for all at Holly Lodge. The Colonel had learned more and more to accommodate himself to the little house and the simple surroundings, and, free from debts and duns, had great peace. Betty, whose heart had flown about like the larks and thrushes from bough to bough, had at last made its nest, and she too had great peace. Kettle turned out to be not only a solid addition to their comfort, but almost to their happiness. His sturdy little bow-legs waddled about bringing wood and water, and doing errands. He was always cheery and helpful, but with the faults which are necessary to the typical boy. He would occasionally neglect his work for the sake of his adored fiddle, and when sent down to the river shore to catch crabs for dinner would become so absorbed in the sport that he would forget that it was merely a means to an end. One day, however, he incurred the wrath of the whole establishment at Holly Lodge. One of Betty's treasures was a great tall glass bottle of attar of rose, of which a single drop perfumed a room. Kettle, passing Betty's open door, the room being empty, saw on the dressing-table the beautiful bottle in which was stored the perfume he loved. The devil tempted him, and Kettle yielded. He slipped into the room, and, opening the bottle, rubbed its contents, a gill or two of attar of rose, into his wool.

Downstairs, a pungent odor, so strong that it was almost asphyxiating, penetrated, and as Kettle's steps were heard approaching the perfume became overpowering. The Colonel began to sneeze, and even Aunt Tulip and Uncle Cesar in the kitchen had to run out into the open

air. Betty, with her handkerchief to her face, rushed into the little hall, where Kettle stood, his eyes bulging out of his head, as he too gasped and sneezed.

"You've upset my attar of rose upon your head!" screamed Betty. "Go out of doors this minute, and I'll hand you over to Uncle Cesar for a real switching this time."

By that time Aunt Tulip had rushed in from the kitchen, and, seizing Kettle by his woolly head, dragged him out of doors to the pump, calling meanwhile for Uncle Cesar, working in the garden.

"Cesar! You Cesar! Come heah right away, an' bring my big scissors. This heah wuffless little black nigger done taken all Miss Betty's attar of rose an' done rub it into he haid, an' arter you git the scissors, cut a switch an' give him a good tunin' up."

This terrifying prospect entirely upset Kettle's moral balance, and he began to protest, spluttering and stuttering, as Aunt Tulip pumped water vigorously on his offending head.

"I 'clar ter goodness, I ain' never see Miss Betty's attar of rose. I ain' never tetch it."

At that, Aunt Tulip stopped pumping on Kettle long enough to shake him violently.

"Does you know where liars go?" cried Aunt Tulip indignantly. "Doan' you know nothin' 'bout the lake burnin' wid fire an' brimstone, an' the devil stan'in' by wid a red hot pitchfork, stickin' it into dem sinners?"

This awful future, the arrival of Uncle Cesar with the scissors, Aunt Tulip's merciless use of them on his wool, and Uncle Cesar's going off after a switch, brought shrieks from Kettle, as if he were being murdered by inches. Betty, in the house, hearing Kettle's screams, ran out, and Uncle Cesar reappeared at the same moment with a switch of horrifying proportions. Poor Kettle, with every scrap of wool cut off his head, leaving his skull as bare as an egg, was so drenched and frightened and weebegone, that Betty's heart melted.

"I think, Uncle Cesar," she said, "we won't give Kettle that switching to-day, though he certainly deserves it."

Uncle Cesar was loth to lay aside the instrument of torture.

"Miss Betty, you better lemme give him a dozen licks anyhow," urged Uncle Cesar. "You kyarn' raise boys 'thout licks."

But Betty demurred. Kettle, meanwhile, poured out a flood of penitential tears, and, moved by Betty's clemency, confessed that he had emptied the bottle of attar of rose on his head and rubbed it in. He even offered to produce the empty bottle to corroborate his word, which nobody doubted. However, the oft-deferred switching was once more postponed, and the improved prospects raised Kettle's spirits immediately. Half an hour afterward, when he was in dry clothes, he

was as cheerful as ever, although minus his wool, and, having been sent to the wood-pile by the still indignant Aunt Tulip, was seen standing on his head in the intervals of picking up chips.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BROKEN DREAM

As the sunny autumn succeeded the enchanted summer, it seemed to Betty as if a new and lovely light were over the world. Fortescue's letters, his constant gifts, the books which came often, and the music he sent her, and which Betty played and sang to her harp, were so many messages of love. Fortescue wrote that he had applied for leave, and that by making close connections he would be able to spend ten whole days at Rosehill. He meant to give a ball on Christmas Eve at Rosehill, and, as he wrote Betty, she could practise her future rôle as mistress of Rosehill. Fortescue could not manage the ball as well as the county people managed their Christmas ball. All he could do was to order the music and the supper and everything from Baltimore, but when Betty presided at Rosehill things could be done better and in true Virginia style. He hoped to arrive some days before Christmas.

Then Betty began the pleasant process of counting the days. This she confided to the Colonel, for Betty understood, as few young things do, the yearning of the old for the confidence of the young, the delicacy felt by an old man lest he intrude upon the secrets of the young.

The two, Betty and the Colonel, tried very hard to dovetail the wishes and duties and interests of the triangle. Fortescue was the third angle.

"Any way," Betty cried, when they had reasoned out that she could not desert the Colonel, nor could she refuse to marry her lover, nor could Fortescue abandon his profession, nor could Betty abandon the idea of presiding at Rosehill—"any way, Granddaddy, it will only be thirty-five years now before Jack is retired, and then we can all three settle down at Rosehill."

The preparations for Christmas gaieties began early, and the same round of dances and hunts and dinners and teas and festivities of all sorts was arranged.

It was the third day before Christmas, and Betty, with her skirts pinned up, her sleeves turned back to her elbows, and a red silk handkerchief of the Colonel's tied around her head, was preparing the icing for the Christmas cake, when she saw Fortescue passing the window. There was no time to escape. The next minute he was in the little sitting-room, and Betty was clasped to his heart. After the first rapture of meeting, Betty made numerous apologies, unpinned her skirts, pulled down her sleeves, and removed the handkerchief from her shining hair,

but Fortescue told her she did not look half so pretty as before. It was a happy hour, one of those little glimpses of the Elysian fields of the soul which come only to the young and the pure. Luckily, the Colonel was taking his afternoon stroll supported by his stick, and with Kettle as aide-de-camp in attendance. The lovers had a full hour to themselves in the violet dusk, the room only lighted by the wood fire and the pale glow of the wintry sunset. Presently, the Colonel came in and shook hands cordially with Fortescue. It was the hour when Betty sang to her harp the old songs the Colonel loved. Fortescue thought he had never seen so sweet a picture as Betty playing and singing to the harp, while the Colonel, leaning forward on his stick, listened with his soul in his eyes. Kettle, squatting tailor-fashion on the hearth, fixed his round eyes on Betty, and his little woolly black head was motionless while she was singing.

Of course Fortescue stayed to supper, and Uncle Cesar was reinforced by Kettle, who was chief-batter-cake-server, and brought from the kitchen the numerous relays of hot batter-cakes, hot waffles, and hot biscuits of which the well known Virginia formula is, "Take two and butter them while they are hot." Afterward, when Kettle had had his supper, he was sent for to exhibit his accomplishments with the fiddle. Kettle played dances and sang simultaneously, his merry music delighting Fortescue, whose musical education was not above rag-time. Fortescue told about the arrangements he had made for the Christmas Eve ball at Rosehill, and Betty thought them ineffably grand.

When Kettle had been sent away, there was much talk about armies and soldiers between Fortescue and the Colonel, whose heart was ever with the fighting men. Betty listened with delight to this modern Froissart's Chronicle, and said presently:

"How glad I am to be a soldier's daughter!"

"And that's why you will make a glorious wife for a soldier," replied Fortescue impudently, at which Betty blushed all over her face and neck.

When Fortescue was walking back to Rosehill, he saw over his shoulder the lights shining from Betty's dormer windows. He went direct to his own room as soon as he reached Rosehill, and after a while saw the lights go out in Betty's windows. Fortescue, who, like most soldiers, believed in God and respected Him as the Great Commander, knew that Betty was saying her simple, earnest prayers for him, and the thought that the prayers of the innocent were heard gave him a reverent thankfulness. To Betty, in her little white bed in the darkened room, with the curtain drawn wide so that she could watch the lights at Rosehill as long as they burned, it was as if the world were growing too beautiful. Deep in her heart was the old Greek superstition that one cannot walk the airy heights of happiness long without a precipice

opening beneath one's feet. The thought oppressed her and kept her awake long after the windows of Rosehill were dark. Something like a presentiment stole into her heart.

"Whatever happens, though," she thought, "nothing can come between Jack and me. We understand each other too well."

Suddenly the melancholy cry of a nightbird resounded outside in the darkness. It was strange to hear that cry at midnight in the dead of winter, and it made Betty shiver.

The next day the gaieties began with great vigor. The county was full of visitors, and the whirl of dancing feet was everywhere.

Early the next day, Fortescue came over to Holly Lodge. He sat awhile in the sitting-room, talking pleasantly to the Colonel, who, in the old days before the continent was linked by railways, had travelled through the far-off country beyond the Rocky Mountains. Betty was congratulating herself upon the extreme good fortune that Fortescue and her grandfather had so much in common. But even that brought a little chill to her heart, for blessings have their price, and Betty was superstitious.

The morning was cold and clear, and after awhile Fortescue asked Betty to come out for a turn with him. Betty went willingly enough. The Colonel watched the two as they started off up the lane toward the belt of woodland that skirted the highway. Betty's trim figure in black, with a little black hat on her shapely head, just came up to Fortescue's shoulder.

Of course Betty and Fortescue had everything to tell each other, in spite of the long letters which had been exchanged weekly. But when they were once in the woodland, with the morning sun shining upon the tall and scattered cedars, Fortescue threw everything aside for the chief purpose he had in view.

"Now, Betty," he said, "I have come here to have you fix the day when we shall be married. I don't believe in long engagements, and never meant to have one. My special duty will end in the spring, and then we must be married."

Betty's eyes grew troubled. What should she say? How could she leave the Colonel? Something like this she stammered out. Fortescue met it impatiently. He believed in her doing her duty by the Colonel, but, man-like, he thought that Betty must do her duty by him too. There was no question of money. Fortescue had enough to do as he pleased.

"Make the Colonel comfortable any way you like," he said. "Let him stay at Holly Lodge or go to Rosehill. My father has given me the place, and some day, when I am a retired major-general, Betty, we shall live there, you and I and our children. But we must come to a positive arrangement now."

Something in Fortescue's tone displeased Betty. He was too confident, too much in the way of giving orders, a thing which Betty herself was accustomed to doing. It cannot be denied that Betty was a little spoiled and rather haughty. Her reply to Fortescue displeased him even more than his words had displeased her.

"I think," she said coldly, "that you are taking too much for granted. Some one must be considered as well as yourself."

This was a most unlucky speech. Fortescue's reply was a retaliation. They were only twenty-one and twenty-six, and although they had far more of feeling, strength, depth, and steadiness of character than young people usually have, they were no wiser or more experienced. Some words followed, impetuous and domineering on Fortescue's part, exasperatingly cool on Betty's. They were both keen of wit, and readily surmised the meaning of sharp phrases. Fortescue's feelings were quick, and Betty had a tidy little temper of her own. Suddenly, they knew not how or when or why, but they were walking back toward Holly Lodge in the crisp winter morning, each with a resentful heart. Their first meeting as confessed sweethearts had developed into a serious quarrel. It was not about those trifling things that arise between young lovers, and which bring tears and reproaches, and then end in forgiveness, but it concerned a grave matter, the regulation of their future lives and their mutual obligations, one to the other. The question of what was to become of the Colonel had seemed so easy to settle when they had considered it on the far-off horizon. Now, when it came close to them, it assumed a dangerous aspect. The rash and inexperienced Betty thought that it must be settled according to her ideas, and that Fortescue must wait until the Colonel was coaxed into saying what he would do in the premises. Fortescue, with a much better idea of the vicissitudes of an officer's life, saw that Betty's plans and compromises and dovetailings of duty were impractical, and told her so. The bitterest quarrels on earth are those between a man and a woman who love each other, and whose anger "doth work like madness in the brain." It was the more intense because each felt to be in the right, and that the other must yield in the name of love and duty. But yielding was new and strange to each. Betty knew so little of the power of money that she resented Fortescue's bringing that into the discussion, and, moreover, she was an arrogant little creature and a trifle too ready for a fight. Fortescue, who had seen the great outside world unknown to Betty, knew the Spanish proverb, "God is the general, but money is His lieutenant." It took all of Betty's self-command to hold back the tears and to keep her lips from trembling. If those tears had dropped upon her cheeks and her lovely mouth had quivered, all would have been well, but Fortescue, watching her sidewise, saw only her head in the air, her delicate face as firm as marble, and said to himself savagely:

"If she does n't care, why should I?"

All at once, a horrid doubt of Betty took possession of his mind. Once, he had laughed at her outrageous flattery of other men, her open cajolery, her pretty coquetries. Suppose, after all, she had no feeling, and was making sport of his honest heart? Perhaps she had never meant to marry him, and was only amusing herself. There might be another man—at this, Fortescue ground his teeth.

They walked the whole length of the lane without speaking. When they got to the paling surrounding the little lawn of Holly Lodge, Betty spoke, but her evil genius waited upon her tongue that day.

"Of course," she said, "as we can't agree, everything is over. But if we appear unfriendly, everybody will notice it, and I do so hate to have people gabbling about me!"

"So do I," promptly assented Fortescue.

"Then," said Betty, "we must be as friendly as ever while you are in the county. Luckily, nobody knows anything, except Grandfather, and he will, of course, keep quiet. People here don't think as much of a man's attentions to a girl as you do, and other men have danced with me quite as much as you have."

"No doubt," replied Fortescue sharply. "I think you were simply amusing yourself all the time. Well, then, I can play that game all right. Good morning."

He was off, and Betty was walking soberly into the house. The fair day had grown dark, and her heart in her breast was like a stone. Woman-like, she began to defend herself against herself:

"If he is so dictatorial as all that, we never could have got on, so perhaps it is the best thing that we found it out immediately. If a woman gives in at once to a man and never remembers what is due anybody else, she might as well be a slave!"

The Colonel was playing on his violin as Betty entered the sitting-room, and what he had chosen was the sad old air of "Love Not, Love Not, Ye Hapless Sons of Men." He laid down his violin. He noticed that her face was pale, in spite of the sharp winter air, and that she spoke with suppressed fury in her voice.

"Grandfather," she said, "it is all over between Mr. Fortescue and me. Please don't ask me about it. We did n't disagree about a trifle, but about something important. We are perfectly friendly, and mean to keep so, because we don't want the people in the county talking about us and worrying us with questions. But it is all over, quite over."

The Colonel started and studied Betty closely. He knew the resolute character, the stubborn pride, that lay beneath all of her frivolities. She could do things as foolish as any girl of her age, but she could suffer more than most. The Colonel sighed as he looked at her pale, unsmiling face, her eyes full of angry light. He understood the sharp

pain of those who have not learned the awful lesson of life, the haughty attitude of the young who have never known defeat, the sufferings of mortified pride and wounded vanity, and, above all, he had an inward conviction that Betty in her heart loved Fortescue. Man-like, he was not so sure of Fortescue, and a resentment, grim and stern, rose within him. Until the young officer appeared, Betty had been quite happy and satisfied at Holly Lodge. In time, she would have married some one in the county perhaps, and would have led that peaceful life on the sunny side of the wall, which only the quiet lives know. But with Fortescue's appearance had come the disturbing vision of a possible return to Rosehill, of a life in the great outside world, going from place to place, of the breaking of all the old ties. Betty had asked him not to question her, but the Colonel felt justified in asking precisely one question.

"Has Mr. Fortescue acted dishonorably?" he inquired, straightening up his old figure, still soldierly.

"No," replied Betty promptly. "Mr. Fortescue could n't do anything dishonorable."

"I am glad to hear it," answered the Colonel grimly. "If he had, I should have felt called upon to chastise him according to the code in which I was reared and have lived and shall die."

Betty's heart was quivering, her pride was up in arms, the whole world seemed full of tears; but when the Colonel talked about chastising Fortescue's young strength, her sense of humor overwhelmed her pain, and she suddenly laughed a little. She did not tell the Colonel the cause of her ripple of laughter, and in another minute her eyes grew sombre and her heart once more hardened against Fortescue.

"You may be quite satisfied, Grandfather," she said. "All that has happened was my own act."

Betty turned and went out of the room. Being Christmas-time, and there being no household tasks awaiting her, no sewing to do, because she had planned that this Christmas-time should be one of perfect leisure, so that she might be free to entertain her great guest, First Love, there was nothing for her to do. She went aimlessly up to her room. Then, suddenly, she felt a sharp headache. Her mental suffering produced a physical pain. She was rather glad of it, as it gave her an excuse for keeping to her room and lying down. The little room was flooded with winter sunshine, and a pretty fire was smouldering on the hearth. Betty drew the curtains, glancing meanwhile toward Rosehill. Her keen eyes caught sight of Fortescue crossing the lawn rapidly. A great buzzard was wheeling majestically over the Rosehill house, and a group of the servants, one of the men with a gun, was standing on the edge of the lawn, prepared to fire at the bird. Fortescue walked up and, taking the gun, sighted and fired, and the buzzard fell upon the roof of the house. This little act wrung Betty's heart.

"How little he cares!" she thought bitterly. "Any trifle can distract him. Well, it was better to find it out in time."

Then, for the first time, Betty turned her eyes away as the Colonel turned his away from Rosehill. She loved the place, and deep in her heart had grown the wish to preside there once more, as Fortescue's wife. But it was impossible, quite impossible, now. She could not forget Fortescue—Betty was honest enough with herself to know that, and honorable enough to respect her own affection. Love is not killed in an hour or even a day. The great stretch of life ahead of her loomed before Betty's eyes as one stands on the edge of a parched desert and thinks of the weary journey across it. For Betty Beverley was the soul of constancy. These harassing thoughts and many others and a racking headache drove Betty to her bed. She threw herself on it, with all the sunshine shut out of her room, just as it had been shut suddenly out of her life.

At the midday dinner, Kettle, who had almost supplanted Uncle Cesar as butler, came up, and, softly opening Betty's door and putting in his little woolly head, said softly:

"Miss Betty, dinner done ready."

"I can't come down to dinner," answered Betty. "Tell the Colonel that I have a bad headache. It will be better to-night, and I am going to the party just the same. But when dinner is over, Kettle, you may bring me up some tea and toast."

Kettle had never known Betty to have an ache or a pain since he had been established at Holly Lodge, and the sight of her pale face, and the weariness in her voice, frightened him. He began to argue with Betty:

"Miss Betty, you better come down ter dinner. Aunt Tulip, she done cook some of the bes' sweet 'taters you ever see in your life, Miss Betty—got sugar on 'em, an' butter too."

"I don't care for any, thank you," said Betty, her heart far away from sweet potatoes with sugar and butter.

Kettle paused for a minute in order to think of some other inducement.

"Aunt Tulip, she got a rice pudden' wid gre't big raisins in it, mos' as big as my fist," urged Kettle.

"No, thank you," replied Betty absently.

But Kettle's sympathy could not be bottled up.

"Miss Betty," pleaded Kettle, "lemme go out an' crack you up some wunnuts," by which Kettle meant walnuts.

Betty's patience was giving out.

"No, Kettle," she said sharply. "I don't want anything except tea and toast, as I told you."

"But, Miss Betty," persisted Kettle, edging toward the door, "I

got a big bag o' chestnuts, an' they mighty good roasted on the kitchen shovel."

Betty's nerves and her temper could stand no more.

"Go away, Kettle," she cried impatiently. "Go downstairs this minute and serve the Colonel's soup."

The tone could not be mistaken, and Kettle went out of the door as if shot out of a gun. Once outside, however, his little faithful heart was still torn for Betty, and he was prepared to take great risks. He turned the door-knob softly, and, putting his round, black, woolly head in the door, whispered:

"Miss Betty, Miss Betty, when I bring up you' tea, lemme bring you up a hard b'iled aig!"

Betty's answer was to throw a pillow at Kettle, who dodged it and went clattering downstairs.

What a strange, unnatural day it was for Betty! Here in the brilliant afternoon, when she was wont to be her brightest and best, she lay huddled up in her bed, racked with physical and mental pain. Her sunny room was dark, and her active little feet felt like lead. The prospect of a party—the music, the dancing, the bright interchange of looks and words that was the wine of life to Betty's pleasure-loving temperament—seemed to her now a dreadful ordeal, to be gone through with courage, and by a stupendous effort to let no one suspect the agony of her mind. Never before had she felt humiliated in the presence of any man, but she felt a sharp humiliation at the thought that in the first encounter of her will with Fortescue's, she had been defeated; whether by her own unreason or his, was equally painful. But there was no backdown in Betty, and she never dreamed of staying away from the party or giving up the fight.

The old Colonel downstairs in the sitting-room felt his heart wrung for his little Betty. Too soon had come to her those shocks and disappointments against which youth rebels. The young demand happiness of life, and are in despair when they first find they cannot secure it.

Kettle, after having taken up Betty's tea, came downstairs again, and, instead of going into the kitchen where he belonged, came into the sitting-room and, perching his small, black, and miserable self upon a little cricket, fixed his eyes upon the Colonel's grave, gray face, outlined against the window-pane. The boy sat so still and silent that the Colonel at last roused himself and asked kindly:

"What's the matter, Kettle?"

"Ain' nothin' 't all matter wid me, suh, but sumpin' is the matter wid Miss Betty, an' it kinder makes me feel bad."

The Colonel sighed; it made him feel bad, too.

All the afternoon Kettle sat there, until it was time to milk old Bossy, a duty which he had monopolized for some time past. Then

there were wood and water to be brought, and all the other duties which Aunt Tulip had devised for him. But when they were over Kettle crept softly upstairs and seated himself on the top step close to Betty's door. At seven o'clock, Betty opened the door that she might call down to Aunt Tulip to assist her in getting into her gown. She almost fell over Kettle.

"What are you doing here, Kettle?"

"Jes' waitin' ter see ef you don' want nothin'," was Kettle's excuse.

The boy's inarticulate sympathy touched Betty's heart in the midst of her own unhappiness.

"I do want something," she said kindly. "I want you to tell Aunt Tulip to come here, and to bring up some more wood, and to do all sorts of things that nobody can do for me except you, Kettle."

Kettle's black face beamed. He ran downstairs after Aunt Tulip, and then began bringing wood, toiling up the stairs with as much as he could carry.

Although Betty was dressed as gaily as usual for a party, and took as much pains with her beautiful brown hair and the wreath of ivy-leaves upon it, Kettle's sharp eyes were not deceived. Something was wrong with Miss Betty.

When old Whitey pulled the rockaway up to the door, Betty came down to show herself as usual to the Colonel. The unspoken pity in his eyes moved Betty.

"Don't be afraid, Grandfather," she said. "I have n't any more cowardice in me than there is in you. I intend to be just as happy to-night as ever I was, and to dance and laugh and sing as I always do."

And then poor Betty laughed a laugh so forced, so full of pain, so unlike her usual rippling laughter, that the Colonel's heart was wrung more than ever. But he knew better than to offer Betty pity.

"Stiffen up, my dear," he said. "Life is full of disappointments. Fortescue is not the man you took him for, that is all. Put him out of your mind."

"I will," replied Betty stoutly, without the slightest ability to keep her word in the matter.

Driving along the hard country road in the wintry night, Betty thought of all those things she might do by which a headstrong, proud, and deeply sensitive girl may inflict pain upon herself as well as another. She would, of course, give Fortescue back his ring that night, and the next day there were to be returned a few trifles other than books and flowers that he had sent her. The ring was a simple thing, a little ruby heart surrounded with small pearls. She had never worn it in public, for fear it might attract attention—people in the country are observant of trifles. But she loved the little ring as a symbol.

That night the party was at Red Plains, and Betty knew she would

meet the whole county. There was no hall for dancing at Red Plains, but the drawing-room was cleared of furniture, and there the dancing went on. As Betty entered the drawing-room, almost the first person she saw was Fortescue dancing vigorously with Sally Carteret. Betty was besieged with partners, and immediately whirled off with one of them. When the music stopped, she found herself close to Fortescue, near the great fireplace in which the Christmas fire burned. They both spoke cordially and smiling, but as Betty withdrew her hand from Fortescue's grasp, she left in it the little ring. Fortescue was exasperated, as any man would be, by the promptness of this stab, and, while talking gaily with Betty, dropped the ring into the open fire, unseen by any except her. Betty's heart gave a great throb of pain. She loved her little ring, and it seemed to her an insult that Fortescue should destroy it before her eyes.

They danced together, and talked so merrily that no one suspected the gulf which they themselves had dug between them, so great is the folly, the rashness, the headlong pride, of youth. Both had a fierce pride which prevented them from showing their self-inflicted wounds to the world, or making an outcry at that dreadful, gratuitous and unnecessary pain which the young inflict upon themselves. As Betty danced, she thought about the poor princess who had to walk upon burning ploughshares. If she were a real princess, Betty thought, she smiled bravely during her agony.

The merriment, the dancing, the pretty Christmas observances, that Betty had loved so much, all seemed now to her wearisome and joyless. She longed for the time to come when the ball would be over and she could be alone, and thought with distaste of the half a dozen parties ahead of her. This was very much increased by the news spread abroad that a ball was to be given at Rosehill on Christmas Eve. Fortescue invited everybody cordially and pleasantly to his ball, saying he could not hope to do things as picturesquely as the county people did them, but he would do his best. Everybody had accepted his invitation with alacrity. He had made himself popular in a community where newcomers were usually looked upon askant, and the prospect of Rosehill being once more opened at Christmas-time pleased the young people immensely.

"Of course, Miss Betty, you will come?" said Fortescue cordially, his heart hardening against Betty as he spoke.

"Certainly, I will," she answered, with a brilliant smile. "I shall be glad to see Rosehill gay once more."

When the ball was over, in the early hours of the morning, with the earth still wrapped in pitch darkness, and Betty was driving home, a faint moan escaped her lips. It was bad enough to have to meet Fortescue constantly, but to go to Rosehill—— She might, it is true, deceive

everybody in the county on a pretense of illness, but she could not deceive Fortescue, the person whom she most wished to deceive. She would go, no matter what it cost her.

The ball at Rosehill was a torturing thing to Betty. By that time, as it is with the wild hearts of youth, she had a settled and burning resentment against Fortescue, which she concealed from the world with pretty smiles and gay words. Fortescue, as he said, could not do things as the county people did, but with well meant generosity he did everything well at his ball so far as money could go. There was a profusion of flowers ordered from Baltimore, along with the conventional supper, totally unlike what the county had, and a band of music beside which the fiddles of Isaac Minkins and Uncle Cesar and the "lap organ" paled. These novelties pleased everybody except Betty, who walked through the rooms where she had spent nineteen years of her short life, and looked around her with a supercilious smile that infuriated Fortescue.

The ball kept up late. Fortescue was an admirable host, and his guests enjoyed themselves. It was quite five o'clock before the last guest had left. The lights were out, and Fortescue, in his bedroom, which had once been Betty's, was smoking his last cigar, and cursing the treachery of a woman—of Betty Beverley, who had won his brave and honest heart, and then, through sheer unreason and heartlessness, had cast him off. He threw the stump of his cigar savagely into the fire, and, going to the window which looked toward Holly Lodge, put it up to inhale the cold, clear air. The blackness and darkness had given way to a pale gray, which preceded the dawn, and by the ghostly half-light he saw from the roof of Holly Lodge a great cloud of black smoke ascend, and little tongues of flame leaping wickedly.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HAND OF DESTINY

WHEN Fortescue saw the thin cloud of smoke curling upward from the roof of Holly Lodge, he sprang up, and, still in his evening clothes and dancing pumps, seized a hat and ran downstairs, ringing bells and shouting aloud as he ran. The servants flocked out half-dressed, and Fortescue, calling to them to follow him and bring buckets with them, sped across the open field to Holly Lodge. The house was quiet and still in the dawn of the wintry morning, and apparently asleep. The burning roof had not yet awakened the family, as the smoke and flames were borne upward. Fortescue hammered at the little front door, and, as the flames began to crackle, put his shoulder to the door and burst it in by main force. The Colonel, in his dressing-gown and slippers, was just coming out of his bedroom on the first floor, and at that minute

Kettle, struggling into his trousers, rushed into the hall, followed by Aunt Tulip and Uncle Cesar in very sketchy toilettes, Kettle shouting:

"The house is afire, an' Miss Betty, she upsty'ars!"

Fortescue ran up the narrow stair, two steps at a time. As he reached the landing, Betty opened her door. She was dressed as when she left the ball; even the wreath of ivy leaves on her rich hair was undisturbed. It was not necessary to tell her what was the matter. The shouts and cries below and the roaring and crackling of the flames were enough. Fortescue seized her cloak off a chair and threw it around her, then they both fled downstairs. The roof over the little kitchen wing was burning furiously as the heat melted the snow, but a white mantle lay heavily upon the other part of the roof, and it seemed possible to save the house. By that time the servants from Rosehill had come running, and Fortescue, throwing off his coat, climbed upon the roof and organized a bucket brigade. It was hard work to save the little house, but, by the blessing of the snow and every possible device, it seemed as if the fire could be confined to the roof. It no longer raged and roared, but smouldered. On the lawn, Betty and the Colonel and Aunt Tulip, shivering in spite of being well wrapped up, watched the fight made against the fire, and led by Fortescue. Suddenly a cry went up: where was Kettle? Betty ran around the house, calling at the top of her voice:

"Kettle, Kettle, where are you?"

But there was no response. Then Betty, despite the Colonel's efforts to hold her, ran in the open door of the house, still calling frantically for Kettle. Fortescue saw her, and, swinging himself down from the roof, ran into the house after her. Outside, Colonel Beverley, his hands over his eyes, groaned aloud. Fortescue seized Betty in the little sitting-room, water drenched, and, without a word, took her in his arms and carried her out. Betty resisted with all her girl's strength. She was without fear, and naturally venturesome, and she felt that Kettle was being left to his fate, but there was a strange delight, a sudden joy, in being held close to Fortescue's strongly beating heart. Then the young officer went back to find Kettle. Although the fury of the fire was being subdued, great clouds of smoke were pouring through the house, and from the outside could be heard his voice shouting as he went from room to room, "Kettle! Kettle! Where are you?" but there was no answer.

A vagrant gust of wind fanned the fire once more into flame, and it looked as if the house must go. The shingle roof over Betty's room caught fire, and with a great roar and crackling the blaze leaped upward toward a lowering sky. Continually, Fortescue's voice was heard calling for Kettle, as he searched the upper floor, blazing and dense with smoke. Suddenly his voice ceased, and no sound was heard except the roar of the flames and the cries and orders of those who were trying to save the little house. Betty's heart stood still: suppose Fortescue should

never come out of the house alive? She turned her head, with its graceful wreath of ivy leaves, away from the blazing house, and could have shrieked aloud in her agony of fear. Then, through the open door of the house, and in the midst of the dense smoke, she saw Fortescue staggering, and carrying a black object in his arms. It was Kettle, frightfully burned, but conscious. In his hands he clutched a little fan which Betty carried to parties. One look at Fortescue showed that he was not badly injured, although half stifled by the smoke. No moan escaped from Kettle, but as Betty ran up he opened his eyes and, looking at her with a pitiful attempt at his usual merry grin, gasped out feebly:

"Miss Betty, I done saved yo' party fan."

Betty burst into a flood of tears. At that moment a merciful down-pour of rain came from the leaden sky. The roaring of the flames turned to a loud hissing and crackling as clouds of steam mounted upward, but it was possible then to take Kettle into the house. The Colonel's room had not been touched either by water or fire, and it was there that they carried Kettle, and laid him on the Colonel's bed.

"Somebody go for Dr. Markham!" cried Betty.

A dozen willing feet ran to the stable, and a dozen willing hands hitched up old Whitey to the rockaway, and Uncle Cesar, climbing into the little carriage, drove off furiously to the village two miles away. Meanwhile, Aunt Tulip and Betty applied such simple remedies as they knew to poor Kettle's wounds. The Colonel stood by the bed, saying to him:

"Be a man, Kettle, be a little man. The doctor will soon be here."

Betty, doing all she could to alleviate the little negro's sufferings, was weeping bitterly.

"Doan' you cry, Miss Betty," gasped Kettle. "Why doan' you do like me? I ain' cryin' none. I tried fust for to save ole Marse's fiddle, an' then yo' party things, but I could n't git nothin' but the fan, the fire bu'n me so hard."

Then Kettle closed his eyes and knew no more for a time. The fire was out, and the men from Rosehill climbed down from the roof. Under Fortescue's direction, they made a great fire in the Colonel's fireplace.

Then began the terrible waiting for the doctor to come. When Kettle could know no more whether Betty was sitting by him or not, she turned and saw Fortescue close beside her. The shock, the horror, the nearness of awful disaster, had torn away all reserve between them. As they looked into each other's eyes, they forgot the presence of Aunt Tulip, still working over Kettle, and the Colonel sitting in a chair by the side of the bed, his gray head bent, and the rare salt tears of age trickling down his cheeks. Yet Betty and Fortescue spoke calmly and conventionally.

"How can I ever thank you enough?" said Betty, putting her hand into Fortescue's. "Suppose the boy had died without any one's trying to rescue him!"

"I could n't let the poor little chap die such an awful death," answered Fortescue.

"Perhaps, after all, it was in vain," replied Betty; "but at least you tried to save him."

Fortescue rose and went out. There was still work to be done. The drenched house had to be dried, fires made everywhere, planks found and nailed over the gaping roof.

And so the time passed until the crunching of the wheels upon the ground announced Dr. Markham's arrival. The merciful downpour of rain continued, and, although it was six o'clock in the morning, the murky day was still dark. Dr. Markham walked into the room and made a swift examination of Kettle.

"Will he live?" asked Betty.

"Perhaps so," replied Dr. Markham. "It is a bad case, but he may pull through."

With quick professional skill, Dr. Markham worked over poor Kettle.

Some arrangements had to be made immediately for the family at Holly Lodge. It was found that, although the roof of the kitchen was burned off and the roof over Betty's room was badly damaged, three rooms on the lower floor were uninjured, except by water. In the midst of the drenching rain, planks were nailed over the burned part of the roof, and the kitchen and Betty's room were made temporarily habitable. Fortescue formally invited the whole family over to Rosehill, and to bring Kettle with them where he could be nursed, but this was gratefully declined by the Colonel. It was certain that as soon as their plight was known all the neighbors and friends of the Holly Lodge family would offer refuge to them. But at present it was impossible to move Kettle.

When everything possible had been done, Fortescue said good-by, leaving a couple of his servants at Holly Lodge to do what was necessary. Colonel Beverley thanked Fortescue heartily, but that only hastened his departure. When he was gone, Betty went up to her room, from which the open sky was excluded by the planks nailed over the roof. The floods of water had been wiped up, and a great fire had been started. As she looked in her mirror, by the pale light of a cloudy morning, she realized that it was Christmas day. The thought gave her a shock; she had forgotten it until then. She took off her simple evening gown, which was torn and muddy and stained, removed the wreath from her head, and put on the plain black wool gown she wore every day. Then, going downstairs, she reduced things to order as much as possible. Some holly wreaths had been hung in the windows, and the Colonel's

portrait decorated with the usual laurel leaves, and the little gifts for Christmas were in a cupboard in the sitting-room. The Colonel was sitting before the great fire, looking so pale and spent that Betty's heart was moved for him. She went up to him, and, kissing him softly, said:

"Granddaddy, have you forgotten that this is Christmas morning?"

"Indeed I had, my dear," answered the Colonel. "It has been such a terrible Christmas morning, and that poor little black boy suffers so that it put everything else out of my mind."

Without a word, Betty showed the Colonel the gifts that were meant for Kettle. Aunt Tulip, who was a great knitter, had knitted him four pairs of good woollen socks. Uncle Cesar had bought him, at the village store, a top and a bag of marbles, treasures which Kettle had never owned in all his short life. The Colonel had given him a new suit of clothes, and Betty had bought him a pocket-knife. Betty's tears dropped upon these things as she showed them to the Colonel.

"Such a willing little fellow," said the Colonel, with a break in his voice.

In the cupboard also lay Kettle's gifts. Kettle was not equal to writing, although he could read a little, but with infinite labor he had printed on slips of paper the names of those for whom his little presents were meant. Aunt Tulip had a butter paddle, fashioned by Kettle himself. Kettle had a little fund of his own, which he had earned in the summer by selling soft crabs in the little village, and this he had expended according to his best judgment, but the selections made Betty smile through her tears. Knowing the Colonel was fond of reading, Kettle had bought from a travelling salesman a book entitled "The Principles of Hydraulics in Mining." For Uncle Cesar was a yellow cravat with blue spots, and for Betty was his principal gift—a large brass brooch, with a huge imitation emerald in it. Betty put all these things back carefully, weeping the while.

"Let us hope, my dear," said the Colonel, "that the little fellow will live to see many Christmas days."

In the afternoon Betty relieved Aunt Tulip at Kettle's bedside. Dr. Markham came again, and was secretly surprised to find the boy still living, though unconscious. In spite of the deadening drug that made him unconscious of his pain, Kettle would move about occasionally, muttering:

"I wonder ef ole Marse' fiddle got bu'ned up? I reckon my Chris-mus stockin' got bu'ned up, too."

A bed was made up for the Colonel in the sitting-room, and Betty was enabled to get a night's sleep by Sally Carteret's insisting on sitting up with Kettle. By that time the neighbors and friends had heard of the calamity at Holly Lodge, and all the day and evening relays of persons had come, bringing everything that could possibly be of use,

making every offer of service, and insisting on carrying the whole Holly Lodge family off. But this last kindness was gratefully declined, and, accepting such help as they needed, the Colonel and Betty determined to remain at Holly Lodge.

The next morning, Kettle was conscious and in terrible pain, but an occasional sharp cry was the only complaint wrung from him. Whenever Betty would say to him, her eyes brimming with pitiful tears, "Kettle, I know the pain is dreadful," Kettle would reply stoutly:

"Naw, 't ain't, Miss Betty. 'T ain't as bad as you think."

For days and nights this went on, but Kettle hung on gallantly to his life, and in the midst of his agony would gasp out:

"Doan' you cry, Miss Betty. This heah pain is a-gittin' better all the time."

At the end of a week Dr. Markham said that Kettle would get well. His burns were very bad, but his face and hands were not disfigured, and although his body would be scarred for life, he might yet be restored to health. By that time the kitchen and Aunt Tulip's room had been repaired, and Kettle was transferred to Aunt Tulip's room, while Uncle Cesar occupied the little cubby-hole where Kettle had slept.

Gradually the little house at Holly Lodge assumed its usual aspect. The Colonel and Betty were flooded with offers of hospitality and with all sorts of services—those kindly acts which in country communities bridge over catastrophes. Fortescue was gone, having left the second day after Christmas. On that day he had come over to Holly Lodge to say good-by and to offer the resources of Rosehill in any emergency. He had come while Betty was watching Kettle, and although the Colonel urged that he might call her, Fortescue evaded it, and cut his visit short. The Colonel asked him if he himself had suffered any evil effects from the fire. Fortescue replied that his eyes had given him some trouble from the smoke, and that he would use the rest of his leave in going to New York to see an oculist. He supposed it was nothing, and that his eyes would cease to trouble him probably before he got to New York. The Colonel told this to Betty in good faith, but Betty's interpretation was that Fortescue needed an excuse to go away as soon as possible, and gave herself no concern about his eyes. In her heart, however, still burned a deep resentment, and a longing regret for Fortescue. He was so brave—he was so much the soldier—and then Betty would check herself sternly, and try to think of him no more.

As the winter days went by, Kettle grew stronger, and was able to sit up in a little chair by the kitchen fire. Betty spent many hours amusing him, his little round, black face delighted with the simple games she taught him and the stories she told him. His Christmas presents had been given him, and of them all his new pocket-knife was his chief delight. He would sit by the hour before the kitchen fire,

whittling industriously, and Aunt Tulip never once complained of the clutter he made. Betty charmed him by occasionally wearing the great green and gilt brooch, and the Colonel religiously read through "The Principles of Hydraulics in Mining." In the evening, before Aunt Tulip put him to bed, it was Kettle's treat to be helped into the sitting-room and to listen to Betty playing and singing to her harp, or the Colonel playing on his violin. The boy's arms had been frightfully burned, but his hands had escaped. Several times he said to Betty, with a strange look of distress upon his little black face:

"Miss Betty, I want to arsk you sumpin'. I want you to arsk the doctor sumpin'."

"What is it, Kettle?" Betty would inquire.

"I tell you pres'ny," Kettle would reply. But the "pres'ny" did not come for a long time. Then, one day in March, when Kettle was able to walk about and was almost well, he crept up to Betty in the garden, and said to her hesitatingly:

"Miss Betty, what I want you to arsk the doctor is, whether I kin ever play the fiddle agin. I been tryin' to arsk 'im, but somehow I c'yarn' do it."

"Certainly, I will ask the doctor, Kettle," answered Betty cheerfully, "and I am sure you will be able to play the fiddle. Yonder is Dr. Markham's buggy coming down the lane."

Betty met the doctor at the house door. Kettle had slipped away; he evidently had not the courage to stay. Then Betty put her question.

"Certainly he will be able to play the fiddle," replied Dr. Markham, smiling over his spectacles. "That little fellow is as hard as nails. There is n't one child in a hundred who would have survived such injuries. But he'll be all right."

Betty called Kettle, who reappeared around the corner of the house. He came slouching up, with a faint shadow of his former grin upon his face. Something in Betty's eyes told him that there was good news for him.

"Hello, you young rascal!" cried the doctor jovially. "In another month or two you will be running around here as mischievous as ever, and you will be able to fiddle all right when you get stronger. But you are not to touch the fiddle until I tell you. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sirree," answered Kettle delightedly, his mouth coming wide open. Then, looking from Betty to the doctor, and back again, and shuffling his feet awkwardly, he tried to express some of the gratitude that filled his humble little heart.

"Miss Betty, she treat me white, and so did you, Doc' Markham. I ain' a-gwine ter furgit it."

Dr. Markham went in the house to see the Colonel, who was ailing, and who had been ailing a good deal that winter. The doctor's cheery

smile and pleasant words brightened the Colonel up immensely. When Dr. Markham rose to go, after one of those long and friendly visits of the country doctor which are so comforting, Betty went out with him. Kettle was waiting outside in the spring sunshine. In his hand was a small object, carefully wrapped up in white paper. Kettle shuffled up to the doctor as he was getting into his buggy, and said to him, with much stammering and stuttering:

"I—I done heah that folks pays doctors fur comin' to see 'em. I ain' got no money, but I got a mighty nice knife as Miss Betty gimme last Christmus', and I want you, Doc' Markham, fur to take it. 'Tain't much fur you, but it's all I got, an' I's mighty glad to give it to you."

Dr. Markham took the knife, looked at it, and admired it, and put it in his pocket, and then, taking off his hat, shook Kettle's little black hand warmly.

"I thank you, Kettle," he said, "from the bottom of my heart. I never had a fee in my life that meant more than this knife. I shall keep and use it, and whenever I look at it I shall remember an honest little boy, who will grow up to be an honest man."

Kettle's face was shining as the doctor drove off, and it shone still more when Betty said to him:

"I am glad you gave the doctor your knife, Kettle. You shall have a new one next Christmas, I promise you."

The spring came on apace, but instead of bringing with it the joy of the springtime, an atmosphere of settled sadness seemed to descend upon the little house at Holly Lodge, where a year ago there had been so much of cheerfulness and merriment. The fire had been a severe shock to Colonel Beverley, and all at once the blight of age appeared to be laid upon him. It was the same with Uncle Cesar, and master and man, who had spent nearly seventy years together, both seemed passing into the shadowy path. Oftener than ever the Colonel would send for Uncle Cesar, and the two old men would talk of their youth and of the four years of starvation and marching and fighting during the war, and of times and events long passed, of which they were the sole survivors. When they fiddled together in the evenings, the music was faint; their bow arms were feeble, and their fingering weak. Kettle, now almost recovered, was able to do much of Uncle Cesar's work, and would have done it all if he had been allowed. Even old Whitey suddenly seemed to falter under the burden of years, and had to be coddled as old creatures should be. As for Betty, it was as if in the midst of a spring morning the soft and purple twilight had descended, as if all sounds of life were stilled and the silence of the night were at hand. She could hardly believe herself the same Betty that had laughed and danced and sung so merrily during her short life. There were the same friends, the same generous hospitality, the same kindly attentions from her friends and

neighbors as ever, but Betty now kept close to Holly Lodge. She had a very good excuse. The Colonel was growing more and more infirm, and upon Betty's delicate shoulders rested all the responsibilities of three old persons and a child. She was quite equal to it, but she could no longer go to dances and picnics like Sally Carteret and the other girls of her acquaintance. It was true that a way for her to go about was always provided by the kindness of those who remembered that Whitey was an old horse, and that Uncle Cesar was an old man. But Betty was rather glad of the excuse to stay at home. She had plenty to keep her occupied all day, but in the soft spring dusk and the moonlit midsummer nights and the cool autumn twilights she would go into the garden and walk up and down the path bordered by the box hedge. In all that time Fortescue was never absent from her mind. She could see his lithe, military figure, his clear-cut, aquiline face, his close-cropped dark head, and could hear his rich, pleasant voice. A painful and humiliating conviction was forcing itself upon Betty's mind; she began to fear that she had played the fool. At heart, she was the soul of good, practical sense, and an act of folly mortified and offended her as it does those who are sound and sane. After a while, she faced the hateful truth that she had acted arrogantly and foolishly, and apparently without heart. Fortescue had been clearly within his rights, and what he had said about providing for the Colonel and everything being made easy by the power of money, instead of being dictatorial and purse-proud, as Betty had thought, was really generous and provident. To lose perfect happiness by accident or the fault of another is hard enough, but to lose it by one's own folly and rashness was heartbreaking to Betty's frank soul and candid temperament.

"But, after all," thought Betty, when in these twilight walks she glanced toward the pile of Rosehill, mute and dark and uninhabited, "it could not have been. How is it possible that I, Betty Beverley, should ever be the mistress of Rosehill, and have Grandfather with me and be the wife of Fortescue? No, it was too much. The gods are none too generous. I had a treasure in the hollow of my hand, and I threw it away. I shall not have it again."

A subtle change came over Betty's look and manner. She was as brave as ever, but instead of the daring light in her eyes and the joyous laughter on her lips, were the calm courage of endurance and a softness and gentleness greater than she had ever known before. She spent every hour that was possible with the Colonel, sitting by him with her sewing—for Betty did all her own sewing—or reading to him, or playing and singing to him; and to all in the little house, from the Colonel down to little black Kettle, Betty was their light and strength. Life had turned its stern face upon her, and Betty was learning bravely and quietly the meaning of that sternness.

CHAPTER VIII.

GLORIA

THE summer slipped into the autumn, and the gold and brown and crimson October days, with twilight skies of amethyst and pearl, were at hand. Betty's hours were very full. The Colonel was growing daily more feeble, but his indomitable eyes reflected an unquenchable spirit. Only, he was gentler, tenderer, graver, than ever before. As the year grew old, and the swallows flew southward, and the cry of the wild geese clanged in the blue air, there seemed to be a note of sadness brooding upon the world. Betty was a softer, quieter Betty than she had ever been, and there was a poignant sweetness in her smile and in her eyes, which sometimes held unshed tears. But it was ever a brave Betty. Her smiles were for the Colonel, and the faithful servants, and poor little Kettle. Her tears were for the few solitary hours she could command. These few solitary hours were when she lay in her little white bed at night, wakeful, and a scant half-hour at twilight, when she could pass up and down the garden path, by the box hedge. And her thoughts were all of Fortescue, and her heart, poor prisoner that it was, beat against the bars of fate and uttered its mournful and passionate cry.

One afternoon in late October, Betty, happening to glance through her window toward Rosehill, saw the shutters thrown wide, and the blue smoke curling out of the chimneys. She started and trembled; it was as if a finger had been laid upon an exposed nerve, and she said to herself:

"I will not let anything that happens at Rosehill affect me. I will not let myself dream or wish or anything"—a thing more easily said than done.

She slipped downstairs and into the garden, and began the steady walk up and down by the box hedge, which was sometimes the only fresh air she could get during the day. The afternoon was mild, and some hardy chrysanthemums, their bold faces flaunting in the autumn air, sent forth a pungent perfume. Whenever Betty walked in that spot, she could live over again the few happy hours of her love. This afternoon, the sight of Rosehill occupied, and the possibility that Fortescue might be there, agitated her. As she walked along in the red light of the declining day, she glanced up and saw Fortescue coming along the garden path toward her. There was something different in his aspect and carriage from what there had been, so Betty's quick and far-seeing glance showed her at once. She stood still, while her heart beat wildly and the ever-ready blood poured into her pale cheeks.

When Fortescue reached her, he held out his hand without a word,

and Betty put hers into it. For a moment they stood in agitated silence. The woman, naturally, recovered herself first.

"I had not heard that you were at Rosehill," she said. "I only noticed just now smoke coming out of the chimneys."

"Yes, I arrived this morning," answered Fortescue quietly, "to stay some time."

"Then," said Betty, "you have a long leave."

"I have an indefinite leave," replied Fortescue.

Betty glanced at him in silence and surprise. They were then pacing slowly up and down the walk in the light of the scarlet and gold sunset. She saw that Fortescue was thin and pale, and that there were strange marks under his eyes.

"Have you been ill?" she asked, the words coming involuntarily.

"Not exactly," replied Fortescue, and stopped.

Betty's eyes again sought Fortescue's. There was evidently something the matter.

"Have your eyes been troubling you?" she said.

"Yes," replied Fortescue.

He seemed disinclined to give any particulars.

"I remember," said Betty, after a pause, and a thread of light stole into her mind, "that after the fire, when you came over the next day, my grandfather told me that the smoke had affected your eyes. Did it turn out to be anything serious?"

"Rather."

"And is that why you have an indefinite leave?"

Betty was determined to wring the truth out of Fortescue, and at last succeeded.

"Yes," he replied; "the smoke affected my eyes very strangely. I went to New York, and saw the best oculists there, and they told me my eyes would probably recover, and did a variety of things for me, but nothing seemed to do me any good. Then I got leave and went to Paris and Vienna, with no better result. All the doctors have agreed that to live a quiet country life, free from excitement, was my best chance. Of course I had to get sick leave, but I would not ask to be retired. I shall fight my retirement as long as I can. I want to be back in active service."

"Of course," answered Betty promptly, her eyes plenteous with pity. "It is a terrible thing to be retired at your age."

There was a pause, and they continued mechanically to pace slowly up and down the garden path in the dying glow of the October afternoon. Presently Fortescue spoke:

"I don't know whether I should have come here or not. But it was so lonely at Rosehill—I can't read, you know—and you said we were to be friends."

Betty, who could usually control her tears marvelously, suddenly

felt them dropping upon her cheeks. They came quickly in a flood and with gasping little sobs. It was through her that Fortescue was menaced with this calamity, that this tragic closing of his soldier's life had come, perhaps never to be reopened. Her heart was so wrung with this thought, she did not know that she was weeping, but Fortescue knew it. He thought she had injured him and even insulted him by her conduct, and he had once thought she had no heart, but now a strange and quick conviction came to him that Betty was very far from being a heartless coquette. And with it came a sudden illumination concerning himself. He had been very hasty, very dictatorial. After all, their quarrel had not been about a trifle, but about what was to become of Colonel Beverley, a serious matter for them to consider, and Betty had shown more unselfishness than he. Fortescue put some of this in broken words. He took out his handkerchief, and, with his arm around Betty, wiped away the tears that were streaming down her cheeks, and Betty, the haughty, the arrogant, the resolute Betty, laid her head on Fortescue's shoulder, and they asked forgiveness of each other, like two children that have quarrelled. But they were not children: their hearts were strong, and each knew its mate.

A half-hour went by; neither Betty nor Fortescue could have told what passed, except that there were clinging kisses, and whispered pleas for forgiveness, and tender promises. They were so quiet and low-voiced that the blue pigeons which nested in the pigeon-house close by the hedge fluttered around them, looking at them, and making little cooing sounds as they stopped close to them on the brown earth. At last the tension of emotion subsided a little, and Betty made Fortescue tell her all the details of his trouble. His case was peculiar. There was not much obvious injury to his eyes, so the doctors said, only he could not see very well. But that was enough. He hoped that in a year or two, perhaps, with country air and rest and quiet, a cure might be worked. Betty, with all her old confidence, and smiling bravely, declared he could get well, he should get well, he must get well.

They stayed out until the sunset glow was past and the purple dusk had come. Then it was Betty who sent Fortescue home.

"I can't ask you to stay to supper," she said, "because I want first to tell Grandfather that we have made up. Have n't we made up?"

Fortescue's answer was a true lover's answer.

"We have made up," he said, "and as you know right from wrong better than I do, I mean to do what you think best, Betty, if we have to be engaged for thirty-four years, until I shall be retired, even if I get my eyesight back."

"Very well," answered Betty, with a wicked smile. "Let us see how long you will remain in that heavenly frame of mind."

While Fortescue was walking across the brown stubble of the fields

to Rosehill, Betty, in the firelit sitting-room, was telling the Colonel all about it.

"And you mus' not worry, Grandfather, about my leaving you," she said, "because Jack has said that he will leave all that to me, and we can find a way, depend upon it."

The Colonel thought that he knew a way, a very easy and good way, by which most problems are finally solved, but he did not speak of this to Betty. He only said:

"Whatever you do, my dear, will make me satisfied."

The next morning Fortescue appeared, and looked much more like his old cheerful self than he had the day before. Betty blushed up to her eyes when Fortescue said smiling, to the Colonel:

"Well, Colonel, I may as well make a clean breast of it. I have come this morning to ask you——"

At this, Betty suddenly dropped her needlework and scurried frantically out of the room. Fortescue and the Colonel talked a long time together.

"I surmise what your disagreement and my granddaughter's was about," said the Colonel. "I think you both did me an injustice in supposing that I would stand in the way of the child's happiness."

Then Fortescue told about his trouble with his eyes, and his chances of remaining in the army, and all the details with which the Colonel was so familiar and so sympathetic.

It was quite twelve o'clock before Betty and her lover had their next walk up and down the garden path behind the tall box hedge.

Fortescue's arrival had very much puzzled Kettle, and he asked Aunt Tulip what it meant.

"Huh!" sniffed Aunt Tulip. "It means that Mr. Fortescue is jes' dead stuck on Miss Betty, an' Miss Betty, she kinder got a shine fur Mr. Fortescue."

Kettle determined to satisfy himself, and, watching his chance, when Betty had returned to the Colonel in the sitting-room, marched in and, planting himself before Betty, asked:

"Miss Betty, is Mr. Fortescue dead stuck on you, an' is you got a kinder shine fur Mr. Fortescue?"

"What do you mean, you impudent boy?" screamed Betty, red and furious, while the Colonel laughed. "How dare you ask such things? I have a great mind to give you a good slap."

"Aunt Tulip, she tole me so," replied Kettle, deeply injured. "An' I jes' thought I'd arsk you."

Betty could not help laughing, and when Fortescue came for his afternoon visit—for two visits a day were the least he could get along with, so he swore—Betty told him of Kettle's iniquity. Instead of denouncing Kettle, Fortescue laughed uproariously, and, calling the boy

out of the kitchen, where he was peeling potatoes for Aunt Tulip, handed him what Kettle described as "a whole round silver dollar," and said, still laughing:

"Kettle, I am dead stuck on Miss Betty, and she has got a kind of a shine for me."

"There, now, Miss Betty," said the aggrieved Kettle. "An' you was a-gwine ter slap me fur axin' you!"

After a week or two, Fortescue mustered up courage to ask the Colonel, since he had said that he would not stand in the way of Betty's happiness, if Betty and himself could be married, and, if so, would the Colonel come to Rosehill to live for the present. The Colonel shook his head.

"No," he said. "Holly Lodge and Cesar and Aunt Tulip and this little black Kettle will see me out my time. It is a part of a true philosophy to take short views of life. You are at Rosehill for another year, anyhow, and I shall remain at Holly Lodge. You and Betty will come over to see me occasionally, I dare say."

Armed with this information, Fortescue went to Betty, and promptly repudiated his promise to wait until Betty was ready before he mentioned marriage.

On a bright December day, mild for the season, Betty and Fortescue were married in the old Colonial church. Betty, who liked show, insisted that there should be a real military wedding, and so from the great fortress thirty miles away came a dozen dashing young officers. There was a great train of bridesmaids, Sally Carteret leading them in beauty as well as precedence. Never had the old church seen such a blaze of gold lace and glittering epaulets and gilt sword-hilts and splendid chapeaux. Everybody in the county came to Betty's wedding, and waited breathlessly for the entrance of the bridal party. Fortescue, with his best man, both in gorgeous new full dress uniforms, were waiting smiling in the chancel. Before the bridal train entered, came Uncle Cesar and Aunt Tulip, Uncle Cesar in a new suit of clothes and carrying in his hand a superannuated silk hat of the Colonel's. Aunt Tulip wore a large red and green plaid gown and a black hat with pink roses, and both wore large wedding favors of white satin. Behind them, with great solemnity, marched Kettle. He was arrayed in a Little Lord Fauntleroy suit, made by Aunt Tulip with the aid of a paper pattern, out of an old green riding habit of Betty's. A large collar of cotton lace adorned Kettle's shoulders, and he too wore a wedding favor as large as a cabbage, with ends that hung below his knees. In dignity and importance, Kettle considered that he ranked next the bride, and enjoyed hugely being the cynosure of all eyes as he strutted up the aisle. Then came the dozen stalwart young officers in splendid uniforms, and, after them, the rosebud garden of girls in fluttering gauzes and

chiffons. When they had all reached the chancel, the officers drew their swords and made an archway of the shining blue blades over the heads of the Colonel, and Betty in her bridal veil. Never was there a more smiling bride in the old church. Fortescue made his responses in what Betty called his "parade ground voice," while Betty's answers, though soft, were clear.

The wedding party went back to Holly Lodge, which was too small to entertain more than a small party. There was punch in the old Lowestoft punch-bowl, and, according to tradition, the bride's cake was cut with the groom's sword. Fortescue's brothers, fine young fellows, were present, and also his father, who, Betty readily agreed, was, as Fortescue described him, "the finest old dad in the world."

When the time came for the bride and bridegroom to leave for the steamboat landing, a handsome carriage and pair, one of the gifts of Fortescue's father to Betty, drove up, and as they passed out, Uncle Cesar and Kettle, standing on each side of the doorway, played on their fiddles the old air which the bands played in the London streets for Queen Victoria's wedding procession, "Come, Haste to the Wedding." The Colonel, in his feeble old baritone, sang:

"Oh, come at our bidding
To this merry wedding,
Come see rural felicity."

There was indeed felicity on the faces of all, especially on that of the Colonel, as the smiling bride gave him her last farewell.

When all was over, and the guests had departed, the Colonel went back into the little sitting-room. There were Betty's harp and Betty's little chair and Betty's geraniums that she tended so diligently, but there was no Betty. The Colonel seated himself in his great chair, and for the first time turned it around so that he could see Rosehill. Yes, everything was just as it should be——

In the twilight a little distressed voice spoke at the Colonel's shoulder, and Kettle, black and miserable, asked:

"Ole Marse, what we gwine do 'thout Miss Betty?"

The Colonel had been without Betty only for a couple of weeks when one morning, some days before the bridal pair were expected, Betty and Fortescue appeared on their way from the river-landing. Betty flew at the Colonel and kissed him all over his face, and shook hands rapturously with Uncle Cesar and Kettle, and hugged Aunt Tulip. The sight of her joyous face was enough to make the Colonel happy.

Then began the St. Martin's summer of an old man's life. Every day the Colonel saw Betty, and every day Fortescue performed some act of kindness or attention to the old people at Holly Lodge. There was no more skimping and saving for Betty, and in lieu of her one muslin

gown for the Christmas festivities, she had a dozen, and a rope of pearls around her neck, and a riding habit from New York, and Birdseye to ride every day. And there was a great Christmas party at Rosehill, the finest that had ever been known there, so Betty privately resolved. Everything was to be done just as in the Christmas times of old, reinforced by all the new and delightful additions now in Betty's power. The Colonel was to come over and spend the night for the first time since he had left Rosehill, as he thought, forever.

It was cold as on the first Christmas Eve that Betty had met Fortescue, but the great house at Rosehill was warm and alight. Betty's first appearance as the chatelaine of Rosehill was admirable, with everything thoroughly well done. The music was furnished by Isaac Minkins and Uncle Cesar and the young gentleman of color with the "lap organ," reinforced by Kettle. The supper was great and enough for five times the number of guests. The apple toddy flowed, and the egg-nog was brewed in the Beverley punch-bowl. There were Christmas songs and Christmas dances, and it was broad daylight on the Christmas morning before the ball broke up. The Colonel insisted on sitting it out, and even did a turn in the Virginia reel with Mrs. Lindsay, in spite of his rheumatism.

When everybody was gone, Fortescue gave the Colonel an arm up the wide staircase to his old room, and Betty was on the other side of him, while Kettle brought up the rear with the Colonel's stick. Once in the room, the Colonel looked around him in amazement. There were his bed in the corner where it had stood for so many decades, and his shaving table at the same angle, his arm-chair was drawn up to the blazing fire as if it had never left the spot, and over the mantelpiece hung his sword in its old place. The quaint old daguerreotypes were open on the mantelpiece, and everything was just as it had been until three years before. The Colonel, a little pale, dropped into the chair.

"What is the meaning of this?" he asked.

"It means," said Betty, leaning over him in her shimmering evening gown and with diamonds shining in her hair—"it means that you are not to go away any more. Jack sent four men and a cart over to Holly Lodge the minute you left, and all these things were brought up the back stairs, and Aunt Tulip arranged them. And Uncle Cesar is to undress you and put you to bed, and you are to throw the bootjack at him when you get angry, just as you used to do. For Aunt Tulip and Uncle Cesar are coming here to live, too, and Kettle is to be your aide-de-camp, and Holly Lodge is to be shut up. It is a horrid little hole."

Now, as Betty had sworn and declared and protested many times over upon her honor as a lady and her faith as a Christian that Holly Lodge was a most delightful little place, the Colonel was much shocked at her moral turpitude, but Betty excused herself by saying:

"Of course it seemed well enough as long as you and I were there together, but it must be a horrid little hole without me."

The Colonel submitted, as the old do, and his submission was very much accelerated by Fortescue saying promptly:

"Now, Colonel, I am the commanding officer at Rosehill, and you will not be permitted to return to Holly Lodge, except under guard or on your parole."

When the house was quiet, and Uncle Cesar had put the Colonel to bed, as in the days long past, the old soldier lay quiet and wakeful in his high-post bed, watching through the chinks of the shutters the dawning of the bright Christmas day. His heart was at peace.

"It is but for a little while," he said to himself.

But the Colonel was to see one more Christmas, a year later. On that day, Betty's boy, the most beautiful baby ever seen, was to be christened "Beverley Fortescue" for the old Colonel. There was to be no Christmas ball at Rosehill, for the Colonel was past going downstairs, and sat in his great chair awaiting the order to march from the Great Commander. The baby was to be christened in the Colonel's room, and out of the old bowl which served both for egg-nogs and for christenings. Fortescue and the Colonel and Uncle Cesar and Aunt Tulip and Kettle thought they never had seen so lovely a picture as Betty, with a pale, glorified face, and wearing a long, clinging white gown such as are seen in the pictures of angels, holding her baby in her arms to receive baptism. The baby, beautiful and dark-eyed, looked seriously at the new world about him, and acted with the dignity worthy of his name.

When the ceremony was over, and the old clergyman, who had also baptized Betty when she was a baby, was gone, Betty, holding her boy in her lap, sat by the Colonel. Fortescue, looking proudly at the baby, said, "My son shall be a soldier," and the baby nodded, as much as to say:

"I know what you mean."

Kettle, in convulsions of delight, watched him, while Aunt Tulip, in a nurse's cap and a huge white apron, revelled in her new dignity as the baby's mammy.

"Boy," said the Colonel to Uncle Cesar, "give me my sword."

Uncle Cesar took the sword down from over the mantelpiece, and the Colonel, putting the hilt into the baby's hand, said to him:

"I give you this sword. It is all I have to give, but it is much, for the sword means honor, and you must keep your honor virgin, and without rust or decay, like this sword. And it means courage. You must fear no one but God. And truth is a sword, and so you must live and act and speak truthfully. When years have passed and this sword comes into your possession, your mother and father will tell you what I have said. May you never forget it."

The baby grasped the sword firmly with his tiny hand, and his

great dark eyes were fixed gravely, as if he understood every word, upon the brave old eyes of the Colonel.

Then the sword was again hung upon the wall, and they all went out of the room, leaving the Colonel to rest, with Uncle Cesar to watch him. For in those last hours, the humble serving-man was close to his "ole Marse." Down in the hall, Fortescue was saying to Betty, her hand in his:

"I have a Christmas gift for you that I haven't yet given you. I see the little dent in the locket around your neck and the place where the chain is mended. I would n't tell you until I had tested it, but I have had perfect sight now for several days."

For answer, Betty threw herself in his arms.

"Now," she cried, "you can once more be a soldier!"

Upstairs, the Colonel was talking feebly with Uncle Cesar, his mind sounding the deeps and shallows of memory.

"Boy," he was saying, "did you ever see a more beautiful little fellow than my Betty's son? He looks like Betty's father, the son I gave my country. But it is all over now, eh, boy? No more fighting and marching and starving and freezing in the trenches of life. Everything pleasant and Christmas weather for the rest of the journey."

"Yes, suh," answered Uncle Cesar. "We kin be jes' as comfortable at Rosehill as ever we was, suh."

The Colonel's eyes suddenly brightened, and he raised his thin figure in the chair, and his eyes saw into another world.

"Hear the music," he said. "The band plays very well to-day; it is playing a fine march. It is for the dress parade. Give me my sword."

Uncle Cesar reached up and took the sword from where it hung over the mantle, and put it gently in the Colonel's wasted hand. With his feeble strength, the old man drew it out of its scabbard, and looked at it.

"It is bright," he said. "There has never been a stain upon it. Here comes the Commanding Officer. Turn out the guard."

Uncle Cesar, who knew what was at hand, answered reverently:

"Yes, ole Marse. The guard is turnin' out."

Then, raising the sword to the salute, the gallant old Colonel heard the last order to fall in, and met, face to face humbly, but without fear and in perfect peace, the Great Commander.



TRAPPERS OF MEN

Ingenious swindles by which the unwary and their money are soon parted

By Samuel Scoville, Jr.

PART I.

The way was all along set full of snares, traps, gins and nets.

—*Pilgrim's Progress.*

"THIS is a Peculiar Proposition," said the Agent to the Manager. "The peculiarity that impresses me, and which will afterwards impress my clerks," said the Manager, "is how you got into my private office."

"I told them that I wanted to see you personally about an invitation," responded the Agent affably. "The invitation was for you—to take a set of our World Literature. This comprises thirty volumes of the inspiration of thirty centuries, from the Zend-Vesta of the Hindus down to and including Marie Corelli, all illustrated by nickel-steel engravings and colored photo-chromo-litho prints which——"

"Pause," said the Manager, "likewise desist, and furthermore cut it out. This is Busy-Day. Unless you are here to make me a present of this by-product of the ages, you are wasting your time; likewise, and more to the point, *my* time. I have n't bought a book for eighteen years; moreover, I don't know how to read. Good-by, come again—say about February 31st. Must you go?"

"Fine!" responded the Agent admiringly. "That's what I call a refined throw-out. If I were here to sell anything, you would now hear the dull thud of retreating footsteps. I'm not. Hence you don't. I'm here to do just what you suggested—make you a present. Our company in every large city is giving to twenty-five prominent citizens twenty-five sets of this Master Work without money, without price, and sometimes, as I am beginning to think, without sense. For reasons which you can blushing surmise, *your* name is on the list. Here are twenty names of other prominent citizens who, without any attempt to throw your humble servant out of their offices, have accepted a set of these books. If you don't want them, say so. I'm in this city to-day to give away these twenty-five sets, and it does n't make any difference to my

salary whether you or the manager of the next biggest coke company in this city takes them;" and the agent paused for breath.

"And there are really no strings attached to this generosity?" queried the Manager, beginning to be impressed, and turning over the hand-laid linen-paper leaves and soft-tinted prints of the morocco-bound sample which the Agent had opened as he talked.

"Absolutely none," responded the other grandly, noting the impression. "If you want the set, you sign an acceptance of it the same as Mr. Blink and Mr. Blank and Mr. Bunk of your city have done—probably you recognize their signatures;" and the Agent deftly produced a little sheaf of orders.

"In this acceptance you agree to put these books on your shelves in bindings approved of by us, to examine them at your leisure, and, if they seem good to you, to write us a letter saying so. You don't have to do that unless you wish, although, of course, we should like to have you."

The Manager looked at the list of prominent citizens and recognized a class-mate. "One minute," he said craftily, and seized his desk telephone.

"Certainly," said the Agent heartily, looking at his watch. "One can't be too careful about taking presents. I can give you just five minutes more of my time, which, although not quoted at your rates, yet has a certain value of its own."

Thereupon followed this monologue:

"Get Mr. Jinks to the wire."

"Hello, Jinks! This is Jenks."

"What do you know about a set of World Literature in thirty volumes, comprising the wit, wisdom, prose, and poesy of the universe?"

"Going to send *you* one! Why? On account of your looks or because you know *me*?"

"Prominent citizen! You!"

"Not another word or I'll tell the president of the concern, who is now reposing in my office, what an insignificant molecule you are, and he'll send me your set."

"Good-by."

"Mr. Agent, have a cigar," said the Manager genially, hanging up the receiver. "I see that I was about to make the egregious business error of refusing to take something for nothing. Cheerfully will I

agree to take your set of books, put them in my library, and send you a letter, in somewhat guarded terms, to the effect that I have read or am considering the reading of the whole thirty volumes with much profit and pleasure. Welcome to our city!"

"You nearly lost those books by being too careful," said the Agent forgivingly, extending a blank form and a stylographic pen. "I could n't have spent much more of my time here."

The Manager carefully read the following form:

BOXBURGHE PRESS,
New York City, New York.

GENTLEMEN:

I beg to advise you that I hereby accept your offer made to-day by your representative, Mr. F. Flam. It is understood by me that you are to furnish, free of cost, the sheets and illustrations of the "Boxburghe Classics," and I agree that within one month after receipt of same I will have the sheets bound in the following manner subject to your approval: Binding to be in Buckram or better, the title "Boxburghe Classics," the number of the volume, the number of pages, and the name "Boxburghe Press" to be embossed or labelled on the back of each volume. I also agree to place these books in my library, and to advise the Boxburghe Press when they are placed there.

It is further understood and agreed that the title to sheets of this work is to remain in the Boxburghe Press until they are bound in the manner above-mentioned.

Yours truly,

"What's this about binding?" inquired the Manager, pen in air.

"We deliver the sheets of the thirty volumes, and you bind them to suit yourself," replied the Agent. "We insert that clause, 'subject to our approval,' because, of course, we can't afford to have our books appear in any impossible binding, like paper or pasteboard. As a matter of fact, you can have any binding from morocco down to buckram to suit yourself, and we'll approve it.

"Binding does seem to come pretty high in this city, though," continued the Agent reflectively. "Here are some estimates which I got yesterday."

"Great Maria! three dollars a volume!" ejaculated the Manager, examining the estimates. "I should say it *was* high. That would make your little present stand me just ninety dollars."

"Yes, to be sure," said the Agent. "It's ridiculous, but probably you have some binder of your own. If not, I know of one in New York who does good binding in buckram for \$1.29 a volume."

"I have n't any binder on my staff," responded the Manager. "This office may look to you like a Carnegie Library, but in reality it's maintained to sell coke. Can you give me the address of that binder?"

"Surely," said the Agent obligingly. "In fact, I think I have some of his order-blanks in my pocket now in connection with some work he has been doing for us. He has no connection with us, of course, and I don't want to take the responsibility of recommending him, but I will say that he's always done our work satisfactorily. If it will be any accommodation to you, I will deliver your copies directly to him with the order, and that will save you the trouble of expressing them to him."

"That's very nice of you," said the Manager.

"Don't mention it," responded the Agent politely, and the Manager signed the first order and also the following:

RED RIVER BINDERY Co.,
New York and Philadelphia.

GENTLEMEN:

You will please deliver to me, bound, one set of the "Boxburghe Library of Classics"—thirty volumes to the set, this set to be the Members' Edition De Luxe, limited to one thousand sets, the sheets and illustrations of same to be furnished free of cost by the Boxburghe Press, binding to be in Art Buckram—for which I agree to pay \$1.29 per volume.

There shall be no other cost to me than the above \$1.29 per volume.

I understand that this order is one of five, and therefore cannot be cancelled, and Bindery Co. will not be responsible for any agreements other than those embodied in the above order.

An interval of ten days is supposed to elapse between the first and second acts. Scene of the second act laid at Manager's office—another telephone monologue:

"Hey, Jinks, my presentation copy of the World Literature has arrived; express charges, \$3.50; bill for binding, \$38.70."

"Punk."

"Wood-fibre paper, type broken, no pictures, shiny binding, color of smallpox."

"You're a fine prominent citizen! You look more to me like a prominent come-on."

"Well, I'm not going to pay for the blame' things, any way."

"Good-by."

Ensued the following correspondence:

JANUARY 13, 1910.

RED RIVER BINDERY Co.,
New York and Philadelphia.

GENTLEMEN:

I am in receipt of your bill of January 12th for binding thirty volumes of the Boxburghe Library of Classics, and I am also in receipt of the books, which arrived at my house yesterday.

I think there must have been some serious mistake in this matter. The books differ so largely from what your agent represented them to be that I can hardly believe that you have sent me what was intended. Your agent told me that the books were very well printed, on choice paper, and that they were filled with unusually good illustrations.

I find that they are very badly printed, on very cheap paper, and that the illustrations are missing. I shall be glad to hear from you promptly in this matter.

Yours very truly,

H. JENKS.

JANUARY 14, 1910.

MR. H. JENKS,
Philadelphia, Pa.

DEAR SIR:

Replying to your favor of the 13th inst., our only connection with the matter was the binding of a number of sheets comprising thirty volumes which were delivered to us by the Boxburghe Press, for the purpose. We do not know anything of the paper, the binding, or the illustrations, and would respectfully refer you to the Boxburghe Press for any information you desire. Our part of the contract was completed upon the binding of these sheets and delivery to you in bound form, and we shall thank you to favor us with your check in settlement for same as per bill rendered.

Very truly yours,

RED RIVER BINDERY Co.,
Per M. A. Bailey.

PHILADELPHIA, 2-28-10.

MR. H. JENKS,
Philadelphia, Pa.

DEAR SIR:

Red River Bindery has place in our hands for collection a claim against you amounting to \$38.70, with interest from maturity. Unless an immediate settlement is made, suit will be instituted without further notification.

We trust you will appreciate that it is to your advantage to give this prompt attention and avoid the publicity and expense of such a procedure.

Yours truly,

HURRY & GALLOP.

The third and last act in this melodrama of greed and guile is laid in the office of an attorney, another classmate of the Manager. Enter Manager, a brick-red book under his arm.

"Not a word," said the Attorney. "He came, you saw, you're stung. Here's an honest binder who knows nothing and cares nothing about what the agent for another company said to you. He gets your order, binds the books, sends them to you, and asks for the contract price. No defense unless you can show that the binder and the publisher are one and the same. They are, but you can't prove it. The books were made up from a set of wornout plates that were probably bought in for junk. I've said all this so many times that I'm thinking of getting it printed on a card, for they landed about a hundred prominent citizens in the League Club alone. This particular brand of robbery," continued the attorney, "may be described as the conversion of property by the diversion of attention. Your mind, such as it is, was concentrated on the first contract, which was perfectly innocuous. While it was so fixed you signed a second seemingly simple one—and you're stung. However," finished the Attorney, "it may comfort you to know that older and better men than yourself have fallen to the game;" and, taking the Manager to a closet, he showed him a long row of books in familiar shiny red bindings.

"I don't dare take 'em home," said the Attorney.

EXTRACT FROM THE DIARY OF A REFORMER

By Ellis O. Jones

I AM wondering to-night whether it pays to try to uplift the human race. As I walked along the street this afternoon, I passed thousands upon thousands of people, not one of whom seemed to have the slightest inkling of what I would do for them if they would only listen to me and repose a little confidence in me. Not one of them realized how I grieve for their unregeneracy or how glad I should be to put into effect the many splendid ideas for their welfare which I have worked out.

Sometimes, however, it seems these people are so wilful. They really act as if they knew better than I what was good for them. What is a person to do with such people? Why should they presume to think that they know what they want or what is good for them?

I am not sorry I am a reformer. Not even the ingratitude of the entire human race can make me sorry for that. Nevertheless, I am often discouraged, and to-night I almost feel it would be better if I deliberately locked up in my breast all the important theories I have worked out, and left civilization to its fate.

A SUMMER SANTA CLAUS

By Owen Oliver

IT was Christmas Eve at Equatoria. The day had sweated out, but the breeze that lazed in from the sea lay hot and heavy upon the land, and upon those who had the misfortune to dwell therein. The stars blinked as if they were sleepy and too warm to sleep. Ralph Carr, a long, lean man, clad in white duck, and the minimum of that, sat upon the veranda of his little bungalow and blinked at the stars. The veranda was netted, and the mosquitoes hummed outside, attracted by the table-lamp in the drawing-room, where Mrs. Carr sat reading. She too was tall and thin. She had been very pretty when they came to Equatoria. A year in the tropics had stolen the bloom from her face, but had failed to steal the charm. She kept sighing over her book; and presently she walked slowly through the French window, and leaned on the back of her husband's chair, fanning herself. She directed the fan with evident intention that the air should also catch his head; and he gave a little grunt of satisfaction.

"No stockings to fill," she said presently, with a quick twist of her mouth.

Carr withdrew his long legs from the rests, and pulled her down on an arm of the chair. She loosened his grip upon her waist, but retained his arm with both hands, as if to show that she objected to the heat and not to the embrace. It was notorious in Equatoria that the Carrs were attached to each other.

"No stockings to fill, Grace," he agreed. "Well, we've sent home the wherewithal to fill them."

"Yes," she said. "It is n't the same, dear . . . especially to us."

"Especially to us," he echoed. "It's a consolation that *they* won't miss much with Granny to mother them. Nobody else is quite 'Mummy,' of course, but——"

"Or 'Daddy,'" she added quickly.

"Daddy has to stay where the halfpence grow! It's what daddies are for! I think that this summer Mummy might take a holiday, and——"

She put her hand over his mouth.

"Ralph, I'll choke you! Of course I know that you'd like to get rid of me." She paused for contradiction, but he grinned provokingly.

"Out fishing?" he inquired.

"No, you nasty wretch! . . . It would n't be a compliment. Out here even a wife is better than nobody."

"Especially when nobody is better than your wife!"

"Is n't she? . . . Oh! Don't squeeze, old man! It's so hot. . . . I was thinking."

"I knew that by the way you were fidgeting, young lady. Out with it."

"I wonder if you'll laugh?"

"In this heat? . . . Well?"

"I want to hang up their stockings . . . and fill them. . . . I want you to play, too, Ralph."

He drew her a little closer.

"I thought," she said presently, "that you would understand."

"I understand," he agreed.

"They aren't their stockings really," she confessed. "I bought them at the store to-day. And I bought things to put in. I paid out of the housekeeping; but, if you want to play, you must give me exactly half."

"Exactly half," he assented. "Yes, young lady?"

"When we go home we can take the silly things. It's only seven months to wait. And we will buy some nice toys; and they can hang up their stockings and have a summer Santa Claus. . . . I'm glad you have n't laughed."

"There's nothing to laugh at, Beauty!"

"No; but there will be. You see"—she drew his arm a little tighter—"we do put *some* things in the stockings—the real ones—just as if they were here."

"The things we sent the money for, you mean?"

"No, no! Now you are being stupid—as usual. . . . Guess again."

"I have long since given you up as unguessable! Do you mean good wishes and that sort of thing?"

"That's part of it. It's more than wishes. . . . The sacrifices that we make—you make a lot, Ralph, all the year for them. . . . We used not to save. Now we do; for the summer Santa Claus, when we go home; to give the precious kiddies a good time. That's why we are careful, is n't it?"

"I think," Carr said, "I have also some idea of giving 'Mummy' a good time in the holidays, Beauty!"

"She has a very good time here with you, except for the—the little empty stockings! . . . Do you know, you've been very good to me, since we came here without them?"

"Since you were so nice as to come. . . . Some wives don't."

"Poof! Don't mention me in a breath with *them*, sir! I'm a real wife, whatever I'm not. Now come and play, Ralph."

He turned her face toward him with his hand.

"It's a painful little play, Grace," he said rather gravely.

"It's painful whether we play or not," she told him. "We'd play it in our separate minds, if we did n't do it together; and I'd rather be painful together, you see. We'll be merry to-morrow. Ko-Lo will make a stew of the pudding, you see if he does n't; or bring it in before the meat, like he did last year! . . . Now come and hang up the stockings."

They walked in arm in arm, put out the table-lamp, and went through to the bed-room. Carr gave a gasp when he saw two little beds there, with a photograph on each.

"I made To-To put them up," his wife explained. "You can't hang stockings on the wall. He said, 'Joss of bab boya and bab gelly.' . . . Wee Ralphie would be in this one, and wee Sis in this, if they were here . . . clothes all kicked off; and hot little faces to wipe. . . . They're better home in England, of course. . . ."

"I knew you'd cry," Carr said almost fiercely. He was blinking himself.

"I'm going to feel better afterwards. I want to look at you and their photos together. Wee Ralphie is just like you, Ralph; the same way of setting his mouth when he is n't pleased with me. 'Naughty ole Dace!' . . . When I say, 'You're not to call me Grace, sir,' he says, 'Daddy do!' and laughs as if he'd scored! What Daddy does must be right, of course!"

"Sis has her mother's wiles," Carr said, staring at the photo. "'Sink you's corse wif me, don't you?'" He laughed unsteadily. "Do you remember we used to think we'd be jealous of kiddies, if we had any. People who have n't children don't *know*! They bring you together."

"And, when you are parted from them, that brings you together, too, Ralph. I shall never, never forget how you have tried to make up to me for them . . . *never!*"

"Oh!" he said quickly. "I know who has tried! Of course we were always pals; and I always admired you; and everybody said we got on well together; and we did. But I never realized fully what an interesting creature you were till we were thrown upon each other here. So, of course, I tried to be interesting, too . . . made a fight against nature! Do you know, I think we've improved each other, lady wife?"

"That's one of the things to put in the dear little stockings, Ralph—a nicer father and mother. Let's put it in! . . . Oh! But I have n't hung up the stockings! Here they are; and here's some string. I'll put up wee Ralphie's, and you shall put up wee, wee Sis's."

They secured the little stockings to the end of the little cribs.

"First," Mrs. Carr said briskly, "we'll put in the rubbish I've bought: native bracelets—those bead things—and dollies, and charms,

and things like that. They can keep them for curios when they grow up. . . . Now the good wishes. We'll put them in. . . . Please God, grow up our boy and girl a good man and woman; kind and unselfish and good comrades . . . and make their father and mother an example that they may follow. . . ."

"Amen!" Carr said.

"Then there are the things that we've been putting in all the year: the little savings . . . and the little prayers we've prayed for them every day . . . even the parting from them for their good."

"We were bound to do that, Grace. Nobody brings children here. We won't take credit for that."

"You need n't have come here. If there had been only you and I, we'd have stayed home and picked up fewer halfpence, I expect."

"Humph! . . . I rather wanted to pick up halfpence for you, too, you know, young lady. It's *your* coming that has been the real economy. I believe we live more cheaply than I should have lived as a grass-widower, besides saving what you'd cost at home."

"You'd have had more little amusements, if I had n't come."

"Now I have a big one." He pinched her cheek.

"I wish I were more amusing. It's so hard to keep bright out here." She sighed. "I try, you know."

"Oh! I know. . . . I'm not a very eloquent chap, Grace; but I think a lot . . . think a lot of you!"

"Do you? . . . That's something to put in the stockings: a daddy and mummy who think a lot of each other; and of two precious angel babies; and who manage to amuse each other, and take care of each other, so that they shan't go home cross and yellow old things. I know we're a pair of pale skeletons; but we're skeletons who'll soon fill out and be a jolly young daddy and mummy, able to make their little ones happy; and each other; but we've done that. I am eloquent, Ralph, don't you think? . . . Now we'll fill up the stockings with love . . . love!"

Mrs. Carr's eyes sparkled. Her lassitude seemed gone for the moment, and her husband watched her admiringly. He slipped his arm through hers, and they stood looking at the little stockings—at the place where the little stockings were before a mist dimmed their eyes.

"God bless them!" Carr said; and his wife said, "Amen!"

"Now you can hang up your stocking, Miss," he told her. "I sent home for a little something. No, it's no use looking inquisitive, and I shan't tell you. It is n't here—I knew if it came beforehand I could n't hide it from you. It's in the mail that ought to have come to-day. They say at the Wireless Station that it will be in very early in the morning. I'll get your 'Santa Claus' before you wake, I expect, you old sleepy-head! When I go for my dip."

"Oh-h-h! I was n't going to tell you; but you can hang up your stocking—I know it's only a sock—too! There will be a parcel addressed to me in the mail. It's about as big as this." She illustrated with her hands. "You're not to open it, but you can put it under your 'hang-up'; and then you can wake sleepy me. . . . Then we can look at our Santa Clauses—and the wee ones' summer Santa Clauses, while they are looking at their winter ones. . . . I should think Mother would remember to have their dressing-gowns ready. She always did for me when I was little."

"I suspect she'll even remember to go in and see that they put them on! You old worry! . . . I know what I'd like to put in your stocking: a letter offering to promote me to a better appointment in a healthy colony, where we could have the kiddies with us."

"They won't yet, will they?"

"No, old girl. I'll have to do two years more here, at least. I think you ought to have one summer home."

"Well, I won't. I have to keep you a nice, agreeable, young daddy. You'd soon be grumpy and frizzled up without your amusing wife. Besides, I get the holidays home, the same as you do. . . . If the letter *did* come—of course I know it won't, only, it's nice to talk. That's where a woman's different to a man. She loves talking just for talking! More eloquent, you see!" She laughed gaily. "If it did come, you'd have to put it in my stocking, and not say a word, and not show a sign on your wooden old face! And I'd get out of bed—or you'd pull me out and call me sleepy-head!—and I'd rub my eyes and say, 'Oh, dear!' And you'd say, 'Look in your stocking'; and I'd dump down on the bed, and say, 'Oh, Ralph, I'm so sleepy. Bring it to me.' And you'd bring it; and I'd scream and say, 'Oh, Ralph!' and——"

She flung her arms round her husband and kissed him.

"I really did n't mean to," she apologized; "but you can take it for a summer Santa Claus!"

"Well, Chatterbox," he said, "I am inclined to think that you *are* my summer Santa Claus! A merry Christmas, dear; and a merry summer Christmas when we take our three months home next year."

"With our little summer Santa Clauses," she said. "Oh, the dears! The dears! The *dears*!"

They stood looking at the empty cribs for a long, long time.

Carr rose early the next morning, put a glass of water in some ice beside his sleeping wife—he always did that, because she generally woke thirsty, and too sleepy to rise at once—and went out clad in pyjamas and shoes, with a towel over his arm. It was a recognized morning costume at Equatoria. He saw the long liner lying in the bay, and knew that she had only just arrived, because the boat of the port officer was

going out to her. Walking down the hill, he met another man in pyjamas—the Colonial Secretary. They wished each other a merry Christmas.

"Force of habit," the Colonial Secretary apologized. "There's no Christmas out here. . . . It is n't the confounded place—though that's next door to Hades!—it's having the kiddies away. . . . I never watch the mail come in without thinking we're at the mercy of what it brings; and what it will take home. . . . Duncan's down!"

"Fever?"

"Yes. . . . There's one good thing about the fever: if you pull through, you may get invalided home. . . . What funks me about the fever is that our missuses will take spells at the nursing; and they are n't equal to the strain."

"No. . . . We would n't like them to be like those lazy hussies who own they are n't up to it, and let a poor devil go under."

"Or cut off home and leave us poor devils to stew it out alone. . . . Mrs. Carr looks a bit fine-drawn."

"Yes. . . . I wish she'd take a spell home. . . . And I don't. . . . Mrs. Drayson all right?"

"So-so! . . . You see, her sister wrote last mail that Ray had a cough. Women are such—women! God bless them! . . . Now for the dip!"

They threw off their pyjamas and plunged into the water, floating mostly, because it was too hot to swim. They came out without consultation at the same moment, timed so that they would reach the boat-stage at the very moment when the boat brought the mails. Carr had three letters, and a packet addressed to his wife. He opened her letter first, because it was from her mother, and would contain news of the children. . . . "Very well and good and happy," it said. . . . There were little notes for Mamma and Daddy; Ralphie's were in printing letters, and curious spelling, and illustrated with drawings of dogs and cats and soldiers. Sis's were in a guided hand, but the straggly kisses were her own. He touched his cheek with the little missives.

"Mine are all right," he announced. "And yours, Drayson?"

"All," the Colonial Secretary said briskly. He seemed to have become a younger man. "Ray's cough has gone, and Maisie is fit. . . . Funny little letters kids write!" He laughed; and laughter is reserved for special occasions at Equatoria.

The two men stood side by side—they had not left the boat-stage—reading. Presently the Colonial Secretary gave a shout. "They've offered me Bermuda!" he cried. "We can take the kiddies there!" He danced a few steps, waving the letter; and he was a stout man!

"You lucky old beggar!" Carr cried. "You lucky old beggar! . . . Lord, I'm glad, though. . . . Shan't we miss you—both

of you! . . . We've got about two years more, unless—Heavens! They want me home!"

He seized the fat Colonial Secretary and jiggled him round. . . . There is a belief among the natives of Equatoria that those excellent Massas "Drayser" and "Carra" were sent home because they went mad. The rumor appears to have originated from the boatmen at the stage!

Carr hurried up the hill at an extraordinary pace, considering the growing heat, and rushed into the bungalow. He paused with his hand on the bedroom door, mopped his face, and waited a minute to cool. Then he went in slowly and quietly.

Mrs. Carr was fast asleep, though the iced water was gone. Carr stood looking down at her. . . . How thin she had grown! And she was such a fine figure of a woman when they first came to Equatoria. . . . Her loose hair made her look very young, and the heat flush on her face made her prettier. . . . "She'll be quite a young thing in England!" he told himself. . . . Then he shook her by the shoulder.

"Letters!" he called in her ear. "Letters! . . . They're all right—both of them. . . . Such funny little letters. Ralphie has done his by himself. He's y-u-r-e l-u-v-i-n s-u-n."

Mrs. Carr nodded her head several times drowsily. Her face smiled, though her eyes did not open.

"Sunny little sun," she muttered. Her voice was a trifle hoarse with heat and drowsiness.

"Sis has done some kisses. Fine old smudges!"

"Little wee Sis," Mrs. Carr murmured, rubbing her eyes. "I wish I woke right up at once, like you do, Ralph."

He sat her up propped with a pillow and gave her some water.

"Read the kiddies' letters," he suggested. "They'll wake you."

"But my eyes won't read yet, Ralph. Let me have them to hold."

She hugged the precious smudgy missives for a time. Then she woke sufficiently to remember to wish her husband "A merry Christmas—when we go home in the summer!" Then she asked for her "Santa Claus," and he handed her the stocking. A letter came out first; and the sight of it woke her completely.

"From the Company!" she cried. "You don't mean—you would n't put it here unless—*Ralph! We're going home!* . . . Now we can enjoy our summer Christmas Day here!"

She laughed a little, cried a little, held up the letters.

"My summer Santa Claus!" she said.

Carr bent down and kissed her.

"Mine!" he told her.

He calls her Santa Claus to this day; but they will not tell anybody why.

A REWARD OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

By J. W. Muller

THIS will be an unmoral story—if any one tries to attach a moral to it. It is like a Manx cat, which may seem an undesirable cat as it is, but would n't be a Manx cat if it had a tail.

It is about Henry Castle, who was the laziest person on the staff of the *Daily Crater*. Some admirers claimed for him that he was the laziest man of all men of all staffs in the United States. However, his art in the utilization of written newspaper language was such that he could write an article of any length without any facts concealed in it, and yet write it so convincingly that an indignant night-desk could not cut anything out of it.

Furthermore, he had once reported a war. He used this fact with fair effect on new city editors if they tried to give him a small assignment.

He had made a shining success in the war. Contrary to all the rules laid down by Caesar and Napoleon, the decisive battle in this war was fought by the rear-guard, and Henry Castle was there. Other war correspondents arrived from the front only in time to rave before a field telegraph that had sent Mr. Castle's account some ten hours earlier.

He did not depend exclusively on his war reputation, but took care to make other hits now and then, when it could be done without unusual trouble. In the intervals he relied on his art in joining words, and also on his extremely close knowledge of office politics.

If any managing editor or city editor ever had stayed long enough, he might, and no doubt would, have laid Henry Castle low. But the *Daily Crater* changed editors as quickly as it spied new ones on the horizon. Each new one moved the furniture of the city room around, which is an ancient rite dating back, probably, to the time of the Roman Consul-Editors, and moved the general staff around or out, which also is an ancient rite. But Henry Castle was left unmoved. Perhaps this was due partially to a persistent, though quite unfounded, rumor that Mr. Castle and the owner of the *Daily Crater* were on singularly friendly terms.

One day the *Daily Crater* took to itself a new managing editor who could play office politics himself and loved to do it, provided they were

his own. He took office with several definite intentions. One was to put a man of his own choice into the venerated place of "star man" held by Henry Castle.

He waited quietly for one of those opportunities for genteel beheadment that offer themselves so generously in the newspaper business. It came very soon. He sent for Mr. Castle, and told him, with delicate respect, that there was a big story for him. The United States Government had discovered, he said, that its twenty-dollar bill had been counterfeited, and so cleverly that there was panic in the Treasury Department.

The detectives, explained the managing editor, had been working for weeks, but so quietly that only now had the *Daily Crater* obtained even a hint of it. Now, however, their Washington correspondent had sent them a tip.

The managing editor smoothed out a telegraph dispatch slowly and fondly. "There," said he. "The paper depends on you entirely." He gave it to the star man with an air of endowing him.

The star man read it, looked at the managing editor, and read it again. He made an attempt to use his haughty manner. The managing editor looked at him steadily, with a benevolent smile and a hard eye. Mr. Castle arose and passed out of the door.

In the city room the star man read the message once more, though it was quite unnecessary. "Secret Service working in Connecticut on twenty-dollar case," it said. He lit a cigarette, adjusted his feet solicitously on his desk, and reflected. The reflection lasted for some time, but it was only one reflection, and it could be put into these simple words: "He's put me on the chute."

The facts in the case were too obvious to require reflection. The Secret Service would catch the counterfeiters within a reasonably few number of days, without doubt. All the newspapers would get the news simultaneously from headquarters; and the *Daily Crater* from office-boys to chief would scream, figuratively speaking, with rage and disgust because its star man had been on the spot and had missed the exclusive news that was right under his nose.

Henry Castle did not try to sustain himself with the sophistry that the State of Connecticut is a somewhat large spot, and that his nose could not be expected to reach quite from one boundary to the other. He knew that there would be no request for a lecture on American geography by him.

He decided to make the journey down the chute as pleasant as possible. To this end, he made requisition for two weeks' salary in advance and liberal expense money, well knowing that the politic managing editor would be generous with rope. When he got on a train, he had a fish-rod and creel as journalistic implements.

As a matter of protective though perfunctory prudence, he went to

New Haven first, where, in a room known to be given over to the Secret Service, he found out just what he expected to find out, which was nothing. Then he went back to a junction and made his fairly serene way to a trouting section of which he had heard from a friend.

The train took him into a precise country whose swelling hills were soberly weighted down with white houses and red barns. In his capacity as trout-angler, Castle observed with satisfaction that there were many streams shaded by woodlands. In his capacity as lazy man, he observed with more satisfaction that the woods looked well disciplined, like the rest of the country.

"You can take your pick of 'em," said the station-master, to whom he applied for a guide. "Hats is dull."

"Hats?" echoed Castle politely.

"Hats," answered the man. "Hat business. Factory's runnin' only half time."

"Thanks, old man," said Castle. "Let me suggest something. I don't want the oldest inhabitant, who remembers where the trout used to be. Get me a boy, not too smart, who knows where there are some now."

The station-master whistled to a boy and said, "That's him." The boy examined the star man of the *Daily Crater* thoughtfully, as if Castle were some inanimate object offered to him for sale. With equal thoughtfulness, he agreed to the offered terms, and led Castle to a boarding-house.

"In hats?" inquired the lady, who kept the house.

"No, madam," replied Castle gallantly. "Owing to physical limitations, I am only in hat singular."

"Seven dollars a week, reg'lar hours for meals, and none served outside of 'em," said the lady, with a sniff.

"Now, then, Solomon Sprague Smith," said Castle next day, when he was garbed for the fishing, "I've got about a hundred trout flies—for style. Where can we get genuine worms?"

Worms, said the boy, were plentiful in Mr. Gransom's place. Mr. Gransom was the manager of the hat factory, and—

"May I hint," said Castle solemnly, "that 'hats' as a subject of conversation lacks that variety which is justly dear to the lover of intelligent communion with his kind?"

"Yes, sir," said the boy. "I'll go git 'em."

When he returned with the plebeian bait, he led the way to a stream almost under the walls of a big building. "Up there is where I work," he remarked, pointing to a window. "This is the hat factory."

Mr. Castle sighed a sigh of resignation.

The hat country had trout in it, and Castle was gratified to learn by experience that his deductions as to easy fishing had been correct. Therefore, he was willing, when they entered somewhat rougher country,

to creep through the bushes and clamber to a pool where, as the boy said, there dwelt a big trout—"a he-one," said Solomon Sprague Smith. "Ain't nobody bin ever able to git him, he's that shy. But mebbe if you sneak awful soft and slow and drop your bait in with your long pole, you might snake him."

Castle sneaked. The rocks were rough and the bushes were rough. A fishing-rod and its line do wonderful things in such conditions. He became determined to get that trout, less for the sake of the trout as a trout, than for the more human sake of giving it a whack on the head.

Just as he wriggled his way to the vicinity of the pool, so that he could hope to push his rod through the masking bushes, there was a rustling in the brush ahead of him. A countryman emerged, stepped into the upper edge of the pool, splashed across, and disappeared in the woods on the opposite side, before Castle could swear at him.

He wiped his perspiring face, and consulted his watch, but only as a matter of form. He had an appetite, educated at great expense, that announced meal-hours more accurately than the best watch; and he returned to the waiting boy, and demanded to be led at once to a place where he could eat.

Solomon Sprague Smith pointed across a swale to a farm-house that, he said, was Mr. Morgan's, who kept a few boarders. Very comfortable and cool seemed Mr. Morgan's, with rocking-chairs on the veranda, and apple-trees shading it. Mr. Castle started for it, almost neighing.

Mr. Morgan, New England AND Connecticut from the top of his head to the bottom of his soul, did not ask what he might have the distinguished honor of providing for his guest, but calculated that he could accommodate him. Mr. Castle accepted the proffer with due gratitude, and was rewarded by tasting something excellent in the line of applejack, which Mr. Morgan brought out after studying him.

Two boarders joined in the applejack affair. One, who was tremendously fat and so merry of temperament that he shook almost continuously from chuckling, was introduced as Mr. Rigby. The other, who was ordinarily fat and not extraordinarily merry, was Mr. Cross. Presently Mr. Morgan mentioned that they were busy making a hat-machine.

Mr. Castle, energized by the applejack, raised his hand and inquired almost passionately, "Does anybody in this rural and otherwise pleasing landscape do anything except hat?"

Well, there was Mis' Morgan and himself, suggested Mr. Morgan. He farmed, and she cooked. But 'most everybody else, they worked at farmin' and hat-makin' both.

Mr. Rigby squinted into his applejack and volunteered the information that hat-making was a pretty good business. "And this pa-tent of our'n," said he, "when we get it right, is goin' to make some smart changes in the trade, hey, Cross?"

"If you don't give it plumb away some day, talkin' so much," responded Mr. Cross, more sourly than be seemed a stout man. "Ain't there enough fellers watchin' us already to find out what we're got? You'll have the whole hat-makin' business of the country tryin' to steal our invention before we git a pa-tent, see if you don't."

Mr. Rigby chuckled and slapped Mr. Cross encouragingly on the back. Full of his subject, he talked hats so fervently at luncheon that Henry Castle regretfully cancelled an engagement that he had made with himself to spend the afternoon in one of the deep rocking-chairs under an apple-tree.

He scanned the newspapers early next morning. There was nothing about counterfeiting in them. He started on his second day's fishing with an easy, even an approving, conscience.

He carried his luncheon. Much as he hated to lose Mrs. Morgan's food, he hated hats more. He ate under a tree, in fair partnership with Solomon Sprague Smith. Then he rested himself against the tree with a good cigar, and surveyed that part of Connecticut with half-shut eyes.

There was a drop of land below him, where lay the Morgan fields, with the farm-house in them like a mother hen. The scene was slumberous. If there were any cows on the place, they were dozing horns-deep in grass. Only the kitchen chimney looked alive. Henry Castle, blowing blue rings, thought sleepily that Ma Morgan was, no doubt, cooking again, while Pa Morgan would be snoozing in some secluded spot, whence he would issue at supper-time, betraying great weariness from arduous chores. "The mad hatters," said Henry Castle to himself, "are, I hope and trust, scrapping over the hat-machine."

His lazy eye wandered over the sleepy fields. Even the roads were deserted, save for two distant hurrying clouds of dust that intimated that teams were coming toward each other, one from the east, one from the west. He compared the dusty travellers blissfully with himself, at ease on a cool, grassy ridge.

It sent him into a blissful half-doze, from which he awoke to light a cigar. He noticed then that the travellers had met—at least, the carriages were standing near each other, with the horses tied to trees below the Morgan place.

When the second cigar was half smoked, his eyes wandered idly over the fields again. That moment he spied men, one by one, diving into a little thicket behind the farm-house. Soon they emerged again, one by one, and flitted across the open space, to sink down behind some bushes in the garden.

"Hooray!" said Castle, to himself. "My fat friends are now going to have their infernal hat-machine hooked!" He watched with placid interest.

Nothing happened. In fact, less than nothing happened, for pres-

ently he became aware that the men had vanished from behind the bushes.

Mr. Castle settled back against the tree for another half-doze, but his news-discovering mind was working and would not let his weary body rest. It was making poetry, in two-column-wide newspaper headlines.

INVENTORS' STRONGHOLD BESIEGED BY RIVALS

DESPERATE FOES ATTACK HOUSE TO GAIN IMPORTANT SECRET

He puffed creatively and evolved some more lines. Then he arose leisurely and strolled toward the house.

In the old hallway, in an attitude as nearly expressive of annihilation as is possible for New England persons, stood Mr. and Mrs. Morgan, staring, gasping, and listening to sounds above. Henry Castle too heard those sounds, and he said nothing to the Morgans, but took the stairs like an athlete.

At the end of the upper hallway he came upon a door-opening wherein hung a splintered door with huge iron bolts dangling ludicrously. In the room was a mob of men that presently resolved itself into ten. Before he could analyze the scene farther, two of the men hurled themselves on him and dragged him in.

"Here! What's the joke?" he demanded.

There was no reply. Castle looked around. He saw that three men in the centre of the group held their hands clumsily in front of themselves, owing to an embarrassing ornament of nickelled bracelets connected by a little chain. Two of these men were his fat friends, Rigby and Cross.

There was a peculiar odor in the room. It was the odor of acid. The room had a peculiar appearance, too. It looked partly like a laboratory, partly like an artist's work-room. Henry Castle's eye fell on a machine in the middle of the place, and he nearly jumped. He recognized it as a copper-plate press; and he knew that by sheer blind, blundering luck he had covered the impossible assignment!

"Gather the stuff up," said one of the men sharply. "Bring the rigs to the door. Now, then, young man! Your turn!"

If these had been police detectives, Henry Castle would have replied, "Now, then! I'm So-and-So of the *Daily Crater*. Fork out your story, boys." But these were not police. He drew the chief aside and handed him his card quietly. The chief stared at him. "I'll be——" said he, too astonished to finish the sentence.

Mr. Castle produced a polite and harmless smile. "Oh," said he, "I did n't trail you. I was up here, trout-fishing, and just fell on this by dumb luck. How much of it can you let me have?"

He intended to get all of it, but he calculated that in dealing with the

Secret Service the meek might inherit, whereas the bluffer would get nothing.

The chief waved his hand, indicating the entire scenery. "You've got eyes," said he. "The rest you'll get from headquarters, if they feel like telling you. I don't mind tipping you off that we're going to run 'em into New Haven. There's no law that I know of to prevent you from going in the same train."

Henry Castle considered train-schedules hastily, and realized with hot indignation that the prisoners would reach New Haven early enough to make the news available for every paper in the United States. He felt personally outraged. His scoop was being stolen from him before his helpless face.

Plans for making the men miss the train flashed through his mind and flashed out again, being absurd, almost as absurd as other plans that flashed in and out for bullying, coaxing, flattering, and bribing the chief.

Then he awoke to a new happening. The men were sounding walls and floors, ripping out wainscoting, scattering ashes from the fireplace, searching for something with ever-growing anxiety.

"Come, now," said the chief to the prisoners at last, when the search had ended without result, "where did you put the stuff? It'll only be the worse for you if you hold out on us."

The prisoners made no reply, unless a chuckle from Mr. Rigby might be esteemed one.

"You, Yates," snapped the chief, confronting the third man—"you're the man that handled the goods. Be sensible. If you give 'em up, it'll take a couple of years off your sentence. The stuff's no good to you now. You can never pass it."

"Nothing doing," smiled Yates. "You jumped us before we printed a dollar's worth."

The chief spat with disgust. "I'll just tell you, for your own sake," growled he, "that we got your agent yesterday and he squealed that you had forty thousand ready to delivered to him to-morrow. However, suit yourself. I don't care, bless your soul! We've got you, press, plate, paper, and all, complete. Get ready, boys. Bundle the stuff into the big rig. This is your last chance, Yates. You've got about three minutes to change your mind."

The star man saw through the Secret Service man's bluff. The raid was more than half failure if it failed of capturing forty thousand dollars' worth of finished counterfeits as dangerous as these.

As he wondered how he could turn it to his advantage, he watched the little group of prisoners idly. The man Yates turned his back to him and moved a few steps. Then Castle knew him. This was the countryman who had waded the pool and scared the he-trout.

"Another Mad Hatter!" thought Castle, amazed. And then he started. "Chief," he said, "let me speak to you one moment."

He drew the man into the hallway and murmured, "I know where the stuff is. What's my information worth?"

"Nothing," replied the chief promptly. "I call on you for it in the name of the United States. If you refuse, I'll arrest you on the charge of being accessory after the fact."

"That's your whole hand, is it?" laughed Castle. "Then here's mine. Arrest me, and I'll tell you nothing. You go to New Haven with a lovely big hole in your case. Don't let's bluff each other, chief. All you need to tell me is the names and records of these men, and maybe just a little bit about how you trailed 'em. That's nothing much to give up, is it?"

The Secret Service man made no reply, but studied Henry Castle's face critically.

"Tell me that," continued Castle, "and I can put you onto the spot where the money is. That is, if you'll promise to do me just one other little favor: don't take your men to New Haven till midnight. There's a late train out of here. Put 'em into jail as John Does or Richard Roes, and don't tell anybody anything before to-morrow. By that time the *Daily Crater* will have a two-page scoop, and no sign that you've been mixed up in getting it for us."

"Nothing doing," said the chief. "Do you know that you're a darned nervy devil, holding up the United States Government? Where did you say the stuff is?"

"Did you say you couldn't make New Haven till midnight?" asked Mr. Castle in reply.

"Looks like after midnight," said the chief, unsmiling.

Without a word, Castle led the way to the pool. Half a dozen men dived like dogs into the wood into which Yates had gone the day before. Henry Castle had an unpleasant hour during which the little thicket was combed without success. However, when he imagined that they had searched under every grass-root, one of them found the counterfeit notes in a hole under a tree. It was a neat bundle made of many newspaper layers, with a heart of two thousand as excellent copies of United States currency as ever were printed.

"Now, tell the honest truth, Castle, old man," said his particular friend, the night editor, to him on the day after the earth-shaking, or at least Park-Row-and-managing-editor-shaking, scoop. "How did you manage to put it all over the boss?"

"Oh," answered Henry Castle, with fine and simple candor, "just by fishing around."

PAULINE

By Clarence Budington Kelland

WHEN Pauline came to wash for us her figure would have caused a credulous person to believe that she had been confined for an unreasonable time in one of those big, square, wooden packing-cases with strips of tin around the edges. The texture and color of her skin brought to mind a bundle of red cedar shingles. She still had a few mouse-gray hairs, which she collected indifferently and wadded into a knot about the size of an economical bakery doughnut at the back of her head.

She spoke with a voice worn ragged by years of back-fence bickering. When she said good-morning it sounded as if the emergency brake had been set on a moving-van. One always hoped she would clear her throat before she spoke again, but she never did. It was one of life's little disappointments.

But Pauline was as useful as the contents of Mrs. Swiss Family Robinson's hand-bag. She could do anything, from washing a pair of socks to mediating in a domestic tempest; and if ever there was a lazy hair in her head, it had long since fallen out.

On her first appearance, which occurred at an hour when most self-respecting washerwomen are dreaming of automatic wringers and vacuum cleaners, she was regarded by us as a calamity, and we discussed her in the low, skulking tones generally reserved for animadverting to the shortcomings of our neighbors.

"She's frowsy," I said.

"One pin does it all," whispered my wife, "and it is n't in solid. How they stay on is a mystery." This is the way my wife talks; most folks have to guess what it's about, but she and I are *en rapport*, and I knew she meant Pauline's clothes.

"Say," bawled Pauline from the purlieus of the laundry, "is this here the soap you expect me to wash with?"

My wife thought it was.

"Might as well try to scrub with a piece of angel-cake. Send that man of your'n after somethin' fit to make suds—and tell him to git a move on him." She stamped upstairs and rolled her head at us. "While I'm waitin', I'll jus' look around the house to see what ought to be done."

It was a threat which she carried out vindictively. When I came back she was hallyragging my wife on her care of the mahogany, and telling her how much she had to learn about the management of a house, and how long it would take her, Pauline, to instil a reasonable degree of efficiency.

"You're like all them young folks startin' housekeepin'. You think all you have to have is a husband to do it. Don't none of you know a doggone thing. But you will 'fore I git through with you, you bet. . . . Now lemme see you polish that table the way it oughter be done."

By noon she was calling my wife "Dearie," and had taken full charge of the domestic arrangements, grumbling and growling the while like a cinnamon bear with a frog in its throat. Her various capabilities and numerous contemporary accomplishments brought to my mind the greatest musician I ever met—the man who played the mouth-organ, bass-drum, snare-drum, and cymbals all at once, with bells on his hat that he shook for good measure. Pauline appeared to wash with one hand while she got meals with the other, scrubbed the floors with her foot, and gave lessons in domestic science by word of mouth. Also, she swore fluently, and I suspected that she smoked a short corncob pipe when in her native habitat.

Often I have marvelled that the Lord, who has created so many billions of people, each one different from every other, can keep on being original. In Pauline He excelled himself: she was the most different person that ever lived. I think she was the Ultimate Individual.

I have already said she took command of the house—more, after her second invasion she made the conquest complete and became responsible for the conduct and health of my wife and myself. We never dared to change from heavy to light in the spring without first consulting Pauline. On leaving the house, she always left full directions how we were to behave until she came again.

When she took her leave that first day she stopped on the threshold and scowled amiably, thus making public six upper and four lower teeth which did not cluster together for comfort, as might be expected, but got as far away from one another and were as offish as space permitted. "I'll be here next Chewsday," she said bronchially—"maybe. I ain't to be depended on. If you want to git somebody else, you kin."

"What do you mean?" demanded my wife. "Of course you'll come. I'm relying on you."

"Relyin' is nix. The best you can do with me is hopin'. I'm darn' good when I'm here—the trouble is in the gittin' here. I've been washin' for some fam'lies twelve year, and doggone me if I don't fall down on the best of 'em every week or so! Why, Dearie, every wash-day Mr. Inglis calls up the p'lice station to see if I'm in."

"In?" It was a triumph of mixed inflection, combining astonishment with curiosity.

"In," repeated Pauline. "Tipplin'," she added explanatorily.

"Do you *drink*, Pauline?" I did n't know my wife had it in her to say it that way.

"Drink? Me?" Her tone was rich with sarcasm.

"But you must n't!"

Pauline looked at my wife and smiled, and it was a smile worth much undergoing to see; it was a comic smile, but it was something more than that. In it lurked tenderness, sweetness. It was such a smile as one might wear if the world were to him like a primer and he loved it and tolerated all its shortcomings.

"That's what my Looey says. He says, 'Pauline, you had n't oughter do it with all them folks dependin' on you to look after 'em. You oughter keep straight, Pauline. Besides, Pauline,' says he, 't ain't sociable of you to go gittin' full in the kitchen before my very eyes and me a teetotal.' Looey's a teetotal, he is, even if he is a cigarmaker and lame in his left laig. My Looey's a fine man, he is, and I'd do any darn' thing in the world for him, doggone me if I would n't!"

"Why don't you stop drinking for him, then?"

"T ain't no use. Been at it too long. It's like havin' false teeth or a wooden laig: once you git 'em, you can't git along without 'em. But"—here Pauline's eyes snapped—"you bear in mind, Dearie, w'ich one of my fam'ly it is that drinks. It's me—not Looey. Mind!"

When she was gone my wife stood still and looked after her until she was out of sight around the corner. I could tell by the utter lack of sound that she was considering tears, but she held them back out of deference to my known prejudice against that form of feminine relaxation. "She loves him," said my wife.

"I believe it." I did believe it, and it was highly astonishing to me. Imagine a bundle of red cedar shingles with a tender heart!

It is not always that one who prophesies about himself can grin and say, "I told you so," but Pauline was right about her unreliability. Sometimes she came steadily for a month, sometimes she would be delinquent two weeks in succession. However, it is significant that my wife got no one to take her place. Gradually we learned from her, and from acquaintances likewise under her dominion, the story of herself and Looey as she had seen fit to relate it, a fragment at a time.

And we came to hoist Looey to the very sharpest point of the pinnacle of all-around excellence, using him as a proverb, a comparison, and an example. People got to be "as kind as Looey," "as steady as Looey," "as patient as Looey." If a man were extra good to his wife, we said he Looeyed her. Looey was as full of virtues as one of those little Yankee tool-boxes is of screw-drivers and gimlets and things.

"Lozey would of been a gentleman and owned his own business if he had n't went and got married to a habit that's always a-draggin' him down, and him not very well in the small of his back and needin' extra soft underwear. I bet he could be alderman if 'twa'n't for me, doggone it!" Thus Pauline discoursed of him. He was always on her tongue, and after a year or so we began to regard him the way I did George Washington when I was a boy. You know the feeling—a sense of something supergood, set apart. When I used to think of the Father of His Country, it sort of took my breath away and made my lungs feel as though they were full of awe instead of air. It was similar with Lozey.

"Poor Pauline!" commented my wife. "Is n't it lucky she's got Lozey to look after her? Whatever would become of her if it was n't for him?"

I declined to make categorical answer, but conveyed by facial expression that I was sure her end would be deplorable.

"My Lozey ain't never said a harsh word to me all the thirty year we been married," related Pauline. "He ain't never so much as cussed me in earnest-like. 'Course every man swears if his dinner ain't on time or somethin' gits burned while you're chinnin' with a sewin'-machine agent. . . . He sent his regards to youse."

We were gratified. This is not ironical. How would you feel if Martha should arise out of the dim past and tell you that George regarded you highly and sent his compliments?

You will notice that she called him "My Lozey" always. If you had seen her thus appropriate him, you would have perceived a softening of the eyes and a relaxing of the grim mouth. She quoted him, and his sayings became a part of the ritual of our lives. She had one to pop at you in every emergency, so Lozey took on, in addition to his other glammers, the dignity of a philosopher.

To produce an example: My wife was suffering appropriately over the scorching of a cake. Pauline was sympathetic. "My Lozey says it's better to cry over burnin' a cake than bustin' a laig." Which bit of philosophy had the advantage of being perfectly truthful.

On another day, when I came home funereally after suffering a noticeable financial mishap, Pauline took my wife aside and whispered in her ear, "My Lozey says there ain't no man's trouble that a pound of beefsteak won't make a poultice for." I had the steak, and Pauline verified her husband's wisdom.

I could go on citing Lozey's proverbs indefinitely, but this is no book of quotations. I have wanted to prove that he was a philosopher, and if two sayings do not constitute him one, or make you believe in his philosophership, then you can think what you like about it. If you were to be physicked and salved and reproved and consoled by his epi-

grams for as many years as I have, you would be willing to have faith on the strength of less than two.

Pauline stayed with us, and as the years went by and there were more in the family to be responsible for, she became a very real part of the family itself. The children called her "Goody Pauline" and were almost as fond of us as of her. She grew not a whit more regular in her habits nor responsible in her agreements, but we would not have changed for another who was as reliable as the city-hall clock. In fact, I don't believe she would have allowed it.

Never in our acquaintance with her had she been recreant in excess of two Chewsdays hand-running, and never had there been a Chewsdays that she had not sung Looey's glories, until the children began in their early Sunday school days to assign him a position in the universe which my wife regarded as profane. It was no wonder, though; sometimes I felt the same way about it myself.

Of course we never had seen him; who ever does see his wash-and-scrub-woman's husband or know her last name?

"Some time," vowed my wife, "I'm going to Pauline's house expressly to view Looey. I believe if you were to give me a choice of a trip to the Yellowstone or a sight of him, I'd not think twice." You will note that my wife did not state which alternative she would cling to, but years of close acquaintance have accustomed me to her manner of expression, and I knew it was Looey.

"Yes," I agreed; "I shall never be satisfied to be gathered to my fathers until I have feasted my eyes on him. Somebody ought to Boswell him for future generations." But, of course, we never went. People never do the things they want to most. If you spent all your life wanting to see Venice, when the opportunity came you would go to St. Petersburg instead. Or maybe you would be satisfied with saying you *could* go if you wanted, and stay at home.

However, the time did come when Pauline failed to appear on the third Chewsday after being away the first two. My wife was so exercised about it that she called me up at the office, and I could hear her snifle over the 'phone. I believe she wanted me to notify the Board of Health, or engage a private detective. It was difficult to arrive at her precise desires.

"I know something has happened to her, and three weeks without a washing!" This is a sample of what she said to me. "You must do something about it right away, and maybe break in the door, but if she's in jail it's the Governor who does the pardoning, is n't it? Possibly the river," she added. "Pauline might have, you know." Now, consider these words and be surprised no longer that husbands sometimes fail to carry out their wives' commissions to the letter even when they were "told distinctly just what to do."

I admit, however, that I was worried over Pauline, and so at the noon hour I went to the address that my wife kept on a slip of paper between the leaves of the big family Bible. It was a long way off on the East Side, and one had to change cars twice. When one got there and looked at the house, it seemed hardly worth while for it to have gotten so far away. It was a tiny cottage, with a white picket fence in front of it, and a gate that actually was on good terms with its hinges. The shades were drawn, and apparently no one was at home. I felt some delicacy about going to the door to rap, which necessity was saved me by the approach of a neighbor. I accosted him.

"Does Pauline live here?"

"Bawline?" he asked and flopped his hands outward.

"Yes," I said; "Pauline and Looley."

He regarded me a moment with wrinkled nose and took a bottle of snuff from his pocket before he replied. "You mean it Missis Baierhannes, maybe? Looley Baierhannes und Missis Baierhannes already."

It seemed probable. He admitted that he knew them, and intimately. "Looley und me ve dake snuff togedder," he explained.

"Are they away from home?"

"Nein. Dey are by the house."

"Is anybody sick?"

"Sick, iss it? Vell, maybe it iss sick und maybe someding differnt. Sicknes you might call it."

I tried to put the next question with great delicacy, but could n't make a go of it, so I asked baldly, "Is Pauline drunk again?"

He jumped and wagged his hands frantically. "Iss who?" he squeaked. "Iss who? Bawline? Bawline Baierhannes is drunk? Nein! Oh, *nein, nein!* Such a voman—nefer so much like a glass of beer once vill she haff, nefer. Always it iss Looley who is drunk, sometimes dis veek, sometimes next veek, sometimes both veek. Ten, twenty year iss he so already, und ven he iss two, t'ree days drunk, den iss he shaky und always Missis Baierhannes she stay home from vork und fix him up. Yes."

I was stunned. Looley a drunkard; Looley the good, the just, the virtuous, the philosophical. It was a shock. "I don't believe Washington had anything to do with the cherry tree!" I said to my friend.

"No," he replied with no surprise. "Maybe so."

"Do you mean to say," I demanded, "that Pauline does n't drink, and that Looley does?"

"Dat iss de way of id," he said.

I heard a movement in the house and the sound of the back door opening. Then I heard a voice, and it was Pauline's, saying, "Now, Looley dear, you jus' lay right there, and I'll be back from the drug-store in a minnit." I seized my companion by the arm and dragged

him down the street. We turned the corner before Pauline reached the sidewalk where she could have seen us. "Now," I said to the neighbor man, "here's a dollar for you, and don't tell Pauline I was here asking questions. Remember!" He looked at the dollar and at me, and shook his head emphatically.

That is how I come to have a secret from my wife. It is Pauline's secret, and she shall never know I have surprised it. If she chooses to be known in the character she has assumed, if she is willing to give up the good opinion of those whose good opinion she values so much, to shield her Looey, then who am I to interfere? If she finds joy in giving up her good name to furnish one for her man, I say, let no one stand in her way. But some day Pauline must die—it is but natural—and then I shall see to it that something about greater love is carved on her headstone.

But that time has not come. Pauline still washes for us irregularly, still she talks of Looey and quotes his wisdom.

THE WITCH-MOON

BY CHARLOTTE WILSON

DELICATE, scintillant Crescent-Lady,
What do you seek through the fields of blue?
Daintily going through April blowing,
O young Moon-Lady, may I go, too?

A-dream you walk in your soft blue meadows,
With a chance-plucked flower in your spun-gold hair,
And a cloud-scarf trailing its silver veiling
And a Star-Child stumbling beside you there!

Bluet, and larkspur, and violet purple!
Knee-deep in the azure the Star-Child goes:
And where you are leading her all unheeding,
O light Moon-Lady, who knows, who knows?

But, oh, I wish that my feet were scaling
Your floating ladder let down for me!
For who would reckon when fairies beckon
And the witch-moon shines through the willow-tree?

ON THE TRAIL OF THE CHRISTMAS GROUCH

By Edwin L. Sabin

JUST where the Christmas Grouch is located, I do not know. Are there any real, dyed-in-the-wool Old Scrooges about? The best that we of modern date seem able to do is to paint him in guise of the Sunday-school superintendent with cotton-batten whiskers burnt off, of the little boy who has received a handkerchief instead of a pirate book, and of the day-after with its bills and its pains; but never, never, have I met the really-truly Christmas Grouch. The trail taken at dusk fizzles out within twenty-four hours; and Christmas night does not set upon the grouch of Christmas Eve.

For who could be a Christmas Grouch? Are you poor in worldly goods? Then, here is a holiday, a feast day, made not for the rich especially. Riches told in figures cannot buy Christmas, any more than they can buy disposition—and Christmas is a disposition. Christmas can be as fitly and as fully celebrated by a smile, a wreath, or a Noah's Ark as by a silver wassail bowl, an electric lighted tree, or an automobile. Christmas is as simple as the fresh-air movement, and as generous.

Are you old, in years? Then here is a holiday, a feast day, made not for the young especially. Years do not affect Christmas. Years do not affect Christmas any more than they affect the heart—and Christmas is of the heart. Or are you young, in years? The essence of Christmas is youth, as it is age. It is happiness: to the child, based upon the material; to the sage, based upon the ethical. Christmas is peculiar and intrinsic, in that it may be as honestly observed by the octogenarian as by the Buster Brown. It is such a mutual and general affair, that the more Christmasses one has lived to see, the greater is one's realization; and the fewer Christmasses one has lived to see, the greater is one's anticipation.

Are you alone, as far as is measured by the visible asset of friends or relatives? Here is a festival where nobody need be alone nor lonely. People do not make Christmas; mere numbers do not make Christmas any more than a crowd makes company. For company, on Christmas, there are memories; the memories which are a heritage of nineteen hundred

years, and the memories which cling to one's own little span, no matter how flat and narrow it may appear. For company there are the happy faces of others; the faces above the parcels upon the street, the faces within the festooned windows, the faces of past, present, and future. For company there is the satisfaction of having done, or the willingness to do; and the weakest may treasure a creditable Christmas act, by word or deed, some time committed; the most miserable may toss a crumb to a sparrow. To essay the lonely grouch, at Christmastide, is a sentimental absurdity; and the sheep-herder upon the bleak Wyoming desert may be as hospitable in his attitude as the grandfather at the *matinée*; in the candle at the log-cabin window there is as much Christmas as in the glare of a Broadway.

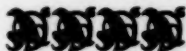
Who would be a Christmas Grouch? Not you because as a man you are fussed and plagued by preparations and expenditures. Not you because as a woman you are unnerved and panicky over that long list that you cannot straighten out. If these preparations and expenditures are considered necessary, my brother, then they are a part of the game; and he who likely enough fanatically gets him ready for a hunting or a fishing trip, to gratify himself, should not begrudge to Christmas an equal elaboration, to gratify others. But why, flustered sister, attempt to list Christmas as if you were filling out an assessor's blank? In fact, about four-fifths of the formal gifts exchanged at Christmas are superfluities, and of these three-fifths are gross exaggerations. A sane Fourth of July? What is equally needed is the sane Christmas.

To my mind Christmas is quality, not quantity; but a quality that, like love, provides all, requires little, and costs nothing. It lies in Thomas Tusser's terse couplet, written of words of one syllable, as simply as was written the story of the creation.

At Christmas play and make good cheer,
For Christmas comes but once a year.

It lies in that sweet old hymn beginning "Oh, little town of Bethlehem"; in the sprig of holly, the bell at the window, the smile upon the face, the "Merry Christmas" which demands no answer, the good-will without which the good deed is as ashes, and which is within the scope of everybody.

Thus the trail ends, and I am not satisfied that the spoor of the Christmas Grouch has yet been crossed. However, did n't some reputed savant once describe the elephant, and conclude by saying, "There are no elephants!" So to play safe I would remark, reversing the method, "Of course there are no Christmas Grouches; but don't be one, any way."



A BROWN STUDY

By William J. Lampton

"I 'M Christmas."

I looked up from my book as I read one sleepy September afternoon, in the shade of a tree, beyond which the woods ran thin towards the valley at the foot of a long reach of low hills. The speaker was a round-headed, sharp-eyed boy of a dozen years or less, well dressed, but not in the Fauntleroy fashion. He was not that type of boy. Evidently he wished to talk with me.

"Oh, you are?" I replied, a bit startled, for I had not heard him until he spoke. Possibly I had been dozing; one does sometimes, you know, over a book on a lazy afternoon. "Are n't you a little early?" I added, under the impulse of a whimsical fancy.

"How?" he inquired, somewhat mystified by the query, but with the familiarity of long acquaintance.

"Christmas does n't usually come in September, does it?" I quizzed him.

"Aw," he responded, contemptuous of my feeble effort at humor, "what are you giving me? I'm not Christmas. Christmas is my name."

"Mr. Christmas?" I queried, still in the whimsy, for the manner of the stranger compelled it.

"No, not Mr. Christmas; nor Willie Christmas"—this with infinite scorn. "I'm Christmas J. Brown. That's my name."

"Is n't Christmas rather an odd name, my young friend? How did you get it, if I may ask?"

"Same as everybody gets their name, I guess. They give it to me when I was a baby."

"Who gave it to you?"

"My mother did."

"Did n't your father have any choice in the matter?"

"He did n't care. He thinks whatever Mother does is about all right."

"Well, Chris," I began, still in the whimsical mood, "where——"

"Don't call me Chris!" he exploded fiercely. "I won't have it. I licked all the boys in school that called me Chris, except the biggest ones, and the teacher looked out for them, till now nobody calls me that, and——"

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Christmas," I apologized in dismay. "I did n't know. But why are you so particular? Most boys have nick-names, don't they?"

"Maybe they do, but my mother says my name is Christmas, and I must be called by it. That's enough, ain't it?"

"Quite, I am sure. Your mother must be a fine woman."

"She's plenty fine enough for me and Pop."

"But how did you get the name? Did n't she ever tell you?" He did not resent my incursions into his personal affairs, nor, if he had any business to transact with me, did he seek to give it precedence.

"Oh, yes," he said brightly; "she's told me many a time."

"Then, tell me, won't you? You know, I rather like you, considering our short acquaintance."

He moved uneasily from one foot to the other, and I feared he was embarrassed by my questions. I was on the point of apologizing for my persistence when he spoke.

"Well, I can't talk very good standing," he said.

"Oh, oh!" I laughed, though rather piqued at the implied reproof of my ill manners. "You must pardon me again. Here, sit down;" and I handed him one of my rugs.

He took it with his thanks, spread it on a smooth patch of grass near me, and lay down flat of his back, gazing up into the sky. He was tired, I could see plainly, and I wondered, not a little, why, but I asked no questions.

"This feels pretty good, thank you," he said, speaking up to the fleecy clouds, though intending it for me.

"I am glad you are comfortable," I smiled at him. "Now go on with your story—it's a Christmas story, is n't it?"

He raised his head high enough to give me a knowing look of appreciation of my small pleasantry. Then he looked once more towards the far-away clouds, and began to talk at perfect ease.

"It happened away back yonder, ever so long ago, before I was ever born, Mother says. Mother had a grown-up sweetheart when she was n't more than a little girl in school. He was a whole lot older than she was, and one day he wanted to marry her. I guess he wanted to all the time, but one day he asked her to. Of course she would n't, being only a little girl like that, and he told her he would wait for her, and she said all right, it was up to him. So she went on to school, and he kept on waiting. But her folks moved to California, and she kind of forgot all about the old chap waiting for her back east, and before she thought what was happening she was a young lady. By this time there was a young fellow came along that was the best ever, and one day he asked her to marry him, and she said he looked good to her, which was a plenty for him, all right. There was n't any waiting this time, one way

or another. It was a hurry call, because he had to go over on the other side of the ocean for two or three years, and he said she had to go along with him or spoil everything. My mother ain't that kind, nor never was, so she said she'd go—to the ends of the earth with him." He added the last few words after a pause. "She did n't say all of that," he explained. "I got it out of a book. Any way, it was about Christmas-time, and just as they got it fixed up all right, a telegraph message come from the old chap that he was on the way and had waited as long as he was going to, or something like that. My, but there was a time in the camp then, my mother says, but they could n't head him off no way, so they didn't do a thing but let him come ahead and trust to Providence, she says. He got there the day after they heard from him, and Mother got Grandma to tell him how it was, and they were just as sorry as they could be, and would n't have had it happen for the world, and would n't he please excuse them this time, and it should n't ever happen again, and so forth."

Christmas was dragging in his story, and the effort to keep his eyes open was quite apparent, but I was interested and wanted him to continue.

"Yes," I said encouragingly; "and did n't he get very angry with her?"

"Not on your tintype!" he replied with freshened energy. "Mother says he's the nicest man that ever was, bar none. He did n't make any row at all. He said he was all to blame, and if she did n't object he would stay till the wedding and give the fair young bride to the noble groom——"

The tired boy was wandering into a fairy story.

"Are you sure he said a noble groom?" I inquired, laughing a little.

"Maybe I was getting it mixed with another story," he admitted, trying to rouse himself. "Any way, he said he would give her to the young man as a precious Christmas gift. Mother says she does n't think he cared so very, very much, indeed, or he would n't have been so—so——"

"But how did you get your name?" I asked sharply, as he lapsed again.

"Oh, Mother called me Christmas because—be-cause—cause they lived happily ever—ever after—and—and—had me."

The boy was asleep, and when I had spread a newspaper over him to keep the flies away, I fell to dreaming of a time I had not forgotten and of a little girl I had known at school. From my reverie I was rudely disturbed by a distracted man breaking in upon me.

"Excuse me," he said hurriedly and with extreme agitation, "have you seen anything of a small boy around here?"

"Christmas J. Brown?" I responded, smiling.

"By Jove, I *am* glad!" he exclaimed, taking it for granted that I had. "He wandered away while we were busy over a crippled motor-car across the woods, and we were afraid something had happened to him. Where is he? You did n't let him get away again, did you?" and his face went troubled, as it looked when he came.

Our talking had disturbed the object of it, who shook off the protecting newspaper and sat up, rubbing his eyes.

"Hello, Nunky!" he said, noticing with a grin of recognition who the disturber of his repose was. "Got her fixed yet?"

With a profusion of thanks, the man took the boy back across the woods, and I followed slowly at a little distance. They did not see me, nor did the boy's mother when I came within sight of the crippled car. I could see her, and that was enough.

"I'm Christmas," the boy had said, and although he had not told me why his mother had called him so, I knew.



STARLIGHT

On Christmas Eve

BY ETHEL HALLETT PORTER

UPON this hill, snow-blanketed,
Close to the frost-blue sky,
No world sound breaks the twilight hour,
No shivering breeze whines by.

Hush! Thro' the glittering silences
Where whirling planets are,
Flashes the prophet's melody,
Spinning from star to star.

Sings, and is gone again in space,
Out, out too far for thought,
Till every heavenly body has
The crystal music caught.

Upon this hill, snow-blanketed,
White wings spread wide in flight,
The ageless peace of Bethlehem
Lies all about, to-night.

THE COMING OF THE KING

By Susie M. Best

WORD cam' to me frae the king o' kings:
"In thy hame I'll bide a wee.
Set thy gate ajar
That there be nae bar
When I wad come to thee."

Sae I swept my housie and garnished it,
And I made a guidly cheer,
And I spak' aloud,
"I'll be owre proud
Wi' the Royal Presence here."

A rap at the door—"May I come in?"
Oh, my heart, my heart, beat wild!
And I looked to see,
But it was not He—
It was only a Beggar Child.

"Gang on!" I cried. "Mak' haste and awa.'
Thy rags are a rude offense.
Should the King appear
And find thee here,
He wad take his Presence hence!"

(Wi' a look as sad as the Christ once wore
On the Road to Calvary,
Like a wraith, mist-formed,
Unfed, unwarmed,
Turned the Tattered Wean frae me.)

The hours drowsed on and the Guest delayed,
But another cam' and plead;
('T was a saul unclean,
A Magdalene)—
"I ha'e need o' the wine and bread."

Upstart'd I in a wild alarm.
 "Gang on, gang on!" I cried.
 "Should the King behold
 A harlot bold,
 He wad scorn to come inside."

*(Wi' a look as sad as the Christ once wore
 When Judas kissed His lips,
 She sank frae sight
 As a doomed star might
 Be gulped in a black eclipse.)*

Still cam' He not, and I greeted sair.
 "Let my coming mak' thee glad!"
 The voice was saft,
 But I only laughed,
 'T was a Fool in his motley clad.

"Gang on!" I cried. "At the chimla-lug
 There's nae corner for a coof.
 It wad bring me dool
 To feast a fool—
 The King wad stand aloof!"

*(Wi' a look as sad as the Christ once wore
 When His side, spear-wounded, bled,
 Like a shape that seems
 In a dreamer's dreams,
 The Fool like a Phantom fled.)*

Then I called to the King baith loud and lang,
 "Come, I've kept the hearthstane clean,
 It was but for Thee
 I scorned the Three,
 Fool, Mendicant, Magdalene."

*(Hark! out o' the Silence, a Voice, a Voice!
 "Thou hast grieved my heart fu' sair.
 Three times I strove
 For a bit o' love—
 I can come to thee nae mair.")*

NEIGHBORS

By Ethel Chapman Haring

THEY had made their first home in one of those great rectangular piles which crystallize, along with the rest of the miniature city, about the subway stations of upper Manhattan. Here for a couple of hours daily Phoebe played at keeping house in the four-room flat that gave on the air-shaft, and the rest of the time she waited for John's return from the Big City where he spent his week-days in order that he might spend his nights, Sundays, and salary of eighteen dollars a week at The Kishavalon, one hundred and forty blocks north.

Evenings when John was not too tired they strolled arm-in-arm through the streets of the Little City, noting the changes in the window-displays, and speculating about the new bills of the moving-picture shows and the ten-twenty-thirty theatre nearby.

"How strange it seems," said Phoebe dolefully, one night, as they stood watching the double stream of joy-seekers pouring in at the doors of an amusement palace, "not to be able to smile and say, 'And how's the family?' to one of all that crowd—and not to have them care the least bit about you!"

John laughed indulgently. "'Course you knew better 'n to expect to find N' York like Rifton Springs, did n't you?"

"But all these people are our neighbors, are n't they?" persisted Phoebe. "Why, at home half my friends live farther away than the width of this little island."

"'Little island'! Well, for a country girl, you are n't getting water on the knee from bowing down before this richest, biggest——"

"What good does its bigness do me if not one of those millions of people is my neighbor?" Her voice trembled and her eyes challenged his.

Somehow none of the reasons which would have come so glibly from his tongue in answer to another's question seemed weighty before the young wife's trouble. He tightened his hold on her arm and drew her along. "Say, girlie, you just walk down the street with me, and we'll look over this big burg from the Bridge. I'll put you wise to a few things that you'll get to know after they've been hammered into you the way they have into me."

They passed the last cut-glass fronted temple to the Stinger and Biter, and the rhododendrons of the little park above the Speedway, and walked out upon the most graceful of the Harlem's bridges. There they stopped and leaned on the railing, looking south: the towers along the banks threw to their feet quivering spans of light that drew their eyes irresistibly to the close-clustered stars of the city picked out in the velvet of the night.

"She's a great old town, Phoebe, but you can't take any liberties with her or she'll claw you. Now, with me, I've lived here four years, and what the togger business don't teach about keeping out of reach of trouble any wise one can glimpse with half a peeper. The other day the Old Man says to me, 'Say, John'—he always calls me John—'I never had a foxier guy 'n you in any of the six Togger Shops. You've got a natural hunch, that's what you've got—a natural hunch. When women have it they call it intuition. There won't be any queer shoved off on this shop while you're here,' says he. 'N' I says, 'Nix; my bottom dollar on it.' You see, a man's got a chance to rub up against people and to see life. I can generally always tell when a man's on the level. But with a woman it's different; you'll see they don't know the people in the next flat. 'Cause why? They don't dare. They might be jail-birds already or just qualifying. A woman has to stick to the friends she knew in her home-town that have come to the city."

"Yes, and Jennie Tooker lives in Staten Island!" demurred Phoebe, with tearful scorn.

"Well, honey, it's tough but it's true: a few friends go a long ways in N' York. I was telling a pal o' mine, Springer—you've heard me speak of Springer—he's a good customer of the store—about some things that turned up missing in the shop—oh, no," he reassured her, "just mislaid—and how you could n't trust your own pawnbroker in N' York, and he said that the parable of the Good Samaritan could n' have been framed up for this burg, 'cause there would n't have been anybody to play the name part. Plenty of men going down to Jerusalem——"

"Jericho," corrected Phoebe, sniffing.

"Jericho is right, that's where they get off," accepted John. "So many of 'em just begging to be stripped that there's hardly enough thieves to go round. Why, this very morning I saw a sign in a big tobacco factory, 'Strippers Wanted.' And you can hardly get across the street for the Levites. But in all this"—he swept the horizon with his off hand—"there is n't a single Good Samaritan. And that puts the tale on the blink. You see, it says that the Samaritan was neighbor to the man who got *his*, and there ain't any neighbors in N' York."

"I don't believe it," said Phoebe, her eyes blazing so that the light on the Metropolitan tower looked like a sick fire-fly. "I may be from the country, but do you think I'm the only one? What makes this

city big? Is n't it just the people from little towns, like you and me, every bit as nice and used to being neighborly? I don't believe city people are one bit different from country people in their hearts: if you're nice to any one, they're going to be nice to you, in New York or Rifton Springs."

"Sounds all right, but it don't work in city society any more'n in business. Make up to a feller and first off he'll make a canvass to find out what you're trying to get out of him. . . . Say, just look at that train take the curve——"

"Trains are n't people." Phœbe refused to look. She went on passionately: "What I want is a neighbor to run in and chat with when my work's done up mornings, and to take a pan of biscuit to when they turn out real well, and to exchange crochet stitcher with, and talk about what a good grocer we've got, and how the milkman did n't come, and is the janitor honest? I want to be able to speak to somebody besides the butcher's boy and the oil-man. If I can't have neighbors in the city, I wish I was back in the country."

"Say, girlie, that's pretty rough on a fellow, to wish you were back——" John looked so miserably into her eyes that her heart softened, and in soothing his trouble she forgot her own.

But the next morning, when she had watched John sink out of sight below the fifth floor in the specious elevator which nothing but a typographical error could make spacious, she closed the door with a sigh. She knew what was lurking in the warped wainscoted corners, waiting for her leisure to shout what was already whispering in her mind: that there were no neighbors in New York. Because she knew, she wiped the cups slowly, and washed out the dish-towel unnecessarily, and brushed up the few crumbs with unnatural deliberation. And when she had pulled the bed to pieces and remade it fastidiously, and dusted everything twice, the loneliness she dreaded swarmed out of the corners, sat down hard on her heart, and shouted.

It was Tuesday, so the postman brought a letter from home. Phœbe read it with swimming eyes. Up in the country, it seemed, there were "snow-drifts six feet deep," and here the skimpy snow-fall was scrambled into dirty heaps the moment it touched the ground, and hustled out of sight like a disgrace.

Pa and I papered the sitting-room with red roses, a real tasty pattern. He said it reminded him of you—red was always your color.

Phœbe looked about her, at the deep green crêpe of the parlor, at the violently grained panels and the tawdry chandeliers, and marvelled that a place so mysteriously splendid in October should be so cheap and garish in March. The flat was unbearable: she would go to the park.

She walked rapidly, stepping briskly to windward of the ash-carts and garbage-wagons, dodging the baby-carriages, and avoiding the recklessly wielded spud of the sidewalk cleaner, and was presently seated on her accustomed bench in the little park about the bridge approach. She looked eastward to the wooded, snow-patched hills across the river, with the convent buildings in full sunshine breaking the curving outline of the tree-tops. It was beautiful, the view—but of what use is beauty unless you can press your friend's hand and know she feels it too? It is less than a joke with no one to laugh. The gulls, too, whose white wings flashed in the sun and turned black against the blue sky as they wheeled, reminded her of the tumbling pigeons at home.

There was a click as a wheel clamped and a perambulator stopped beside her. It contained the fat-faced baby upon whose crude youth she had lavished unavailing cajolery; but the dull nurse had been replaced by a wonderful creature whom Phoebe recognized at once as a true New Yorker.

The long coat which wrapped her slenderness was made of tight-curling black pelt like the elevator-boy's hair; a white shaving-brush stuck smartly up at the side of the black velvet dome of her hat-crown, beneath which the massed puffs of blonde hair shone in dazzling contrast. She had, too, the wonderful complexion of so many New York ladies, before which Phoebe felt pale the ineffectual fires of her country bloom.

The beautiful lady sat down on the bench next to Phoebe's and stared unseeingly out over the river. The baby began to squirm and disarrange its features, and she joggled the carriage-basket impatiently while her face broke up into fine lines and deep wrinkles between the eyes.

Phoebe leaned over impulsively to distract the child from his meditated howl, and the heavy gold chain and pendant which she wore about her neck swung forward. The infant poised for an instant on the brink of lamentation, then drew back with a look-who's-here expression and lunged for the pendant. By the time the two had been separated and the baby solaced for his loss, Phoebe had found a friend. Better, she had found a neighbor, for Mrs. Delmar lived in the same apartment. Best of all, despite her air of the city, she too had come from up-state, and she showed such a homesick interest in all that Phoebe told her that the girl was quite touched.

"It's good of you to listen to this country talk," she said contentedly, after she had freed her mind of the snow-drifts and the sitting-room paper and the pigeons. "I should have burst if I had n't found a friend to talk to soon."

"Good of me! Let me tell you it's like a bunch of orchids in a long, cold winter to hear about the country. Go back? Not on your platinum finish! The city's got me, all right. I hate it, but I could n't

stand anything else. Why, I'd die not to know what was the last whisper in skirts, and not to be able to get a lobster broil after a 'first night.' . . . That's a stunning chain of yours—the kid has real good taste. Heirloom?" She weighed the massive links in her hand.

The girl glowed at the woman's praise. "Yes; I'm the third Phoebe that's owned it: Grandma had it first, and when I was married Mother gave it to me. It's my only nice piece of jewelry, except, of course, my ring." She turned back her glove and shyly showed the diamond that had seemed almost immodestly large until she had compared it with the green-grocer's.

"Pretty little stone," said Mrs. Delmar indifferently "But the chain is handsome, and that old-style stuff is fashionable now." She sighed. "Fancy, I have n't had a new rag this winter, and as for soaking anything away to oil a tight squeeze——" She shook her head.

"It is hard to save, isn't it? We're trying to, for something very special," said Phoebe, flushing. "Every time I have bread and milk for lunch I drop a nickel into the bank on the sitting-room mantel. And when John has anything left after the bills are paid, he pops it in, too."

"Salary! Well, you're in luck to have money coming in regular. Now, we——" She broke off. "What's your husband's business?"

"He's a clerk." Phoebe waited expectantly, but her friend offered no exchange of confidence, and, after a moment's silence, suggested that it was near lunch-time and ironing-day, too.

To Phoebe the walk home was a march of triumph.

"Come and see me," was Mrs. Delmar's parting word, and in their promise Phoebe fearlessly opened the door of her flat: no longer wouldimps of loneliness be lurking in the shadows.

The apartment recovered its charm. How could it be less than pleasing if the elegant Mrs. Delmar found her similar quarters a fitting abode? All the little accidents of housekeeping took on significance now that they could be treasured for sympathetic discussion with her neighbor. And though she actually saw Mrs. Delmar rather seldom, as that lady spent much of her time down-town and always returned nervous and worn-out, the very fact of her existence was a comfort to Phoebe.

And there was always the baby. If she failed to encounter him on the street as he was being propelled by the thick-witted maid among the maze of baby-carriages, she would run in at the Delmars' for a few minutes in the afternoon, and after a half-dozen visits the stolid infant would kick his fat legs in solemn joy and blow innumerable bubbles of welcome as he recognized her.

When the baby chanced to be asleep, there was the apartment itself, of whose confusing richness Phoebe never made an end. At almost every call she found odd bits of bric-à-brac which she had not noticed

before. The furniture was not remarkable, but the numberless knick-knacks of ivory, rock-crystal, and bronze made the mantel and cabinets look like the shelves of a bazar. Handsomely embroidered scarfs were thrown lavishly over tables and chair-backs.

But most wonderful was the collection of Mrs. Delmar's accessories of dress. Her gowns, though carried with conscious "style," were modest even to Phoebe's provincial eye, but there was no escaping the prodigal variety of the Irish lace collars and jabots, the jewelled buttons and buckles, which adorned them.

"No, I don't bother to get gloves cleaned, I just take a fresh pair," she told Phoebe, rummaging among several dozen tissue-wrapped pairs in the chiffonier drawer for one to match her cerise plume; "and Delmar's the same—never wears a cleaned glove nor a darned sock. Good thing, too: silk socks are the dickens to mend!" Whereat Phoebe, glancing at Mrs. Delmar's cracked patent leathers, revised the opinion carefully fostered by her favorite magazine that a real lady is as particular about her boots as about her gloves.

She mentioned to John the uneven richness of her friend's raiment.

"She's likely dippy about gloves and do-funnies. Same with Springer—friend of mine, you've heard me speak of Springer—scarcely ever wears the same necktie twice, and his ulster's so shiny you could comb your hair in it. People like him can afford to have whims. By the way, he asked me to-day to keep this box for him"—John drew a small, square package from an inside pocket—"said he would be knocking around for a few days and wanted it looked after. Just leave it here on the table so's I can get it easy when he needs it." A look of gloom sat oddly between his light eyebrows as he continued: "Wish't I was fixed like him—nobody's stuff but my own to worry about and be responsible for."

"John!" Phoebe looked at him with scared eyes. "Do you mean that you did n't find those store things? Is that what's been troubling you lately?"

"It's enough to trouble a feller, ain't it? I've opened every box in the store, and they're gone, hide and hair. It don't take long to find out what ain't *there*." He added despondingly, "It'll be up to me to make good, of course."

"Is it much?" she asked in a frightened whisper.

"Enough," he replied shortly. "Couple of the fanciest vests in the place—polka-dots and big baroque buttons—a dozen ties and more silk socks. . . . Aw, but cut it! Talk won't find 'em. What's his business—her husband's?"

"She never told me. All I know is that he does n't go down-town till late. But can't I do anything to help you, dear?"

"Yes, just one thing," he answered: "keep a stiff upper lip if

I have to break the bank to square myself." And then it was he who played comforter.

At about three of the next afternoon Springer hurried into the Toggery. His ulster was buttoned to the throat despite the hint of spring in the air, and his face beneath the low-drawn felt hat was pale and furtive. He beckoned John away from his customer and whispered, "Say, old man, where's that package of mine? I need it."

John snapped his fingers. "The devil you do! Why, you know you said it was too valuable to leave around, so I took it home."

Springer bit his under-lip and frowned at the counter. Then, raising his head suddenly, he said, "Nothing to it but to go and get it, I guess. I've got to have it. Will the wife be home?"

"Jiminy, perhaps she won't," replied John, in distress. "But listen"—he pulled out his key-ring—"take this and let yourself in. The package is on the parlor table, end of the hall. Leave the key with the elevator man. Know where The Kishavalon is?"

"As if I slept there—thanks," called Springer, who had grabbed the key and was already at the door.

Half an hour later there was a break in the string of customers, and John picked up from the counter the afternoon paper which Springer had left in his haste. In the middle of the first page were two pictures in oval, interlocking borders, which displayed for identification the features of

TWO CROOKS WANTED FOR SHOPLIFTING

as the two-inch title luridly set forth. John's careless glance froze as he looked, and his arm stiffened. With increasing agitation he skimmed the story below: . . . "man and wife . . . variously known . . . Springer most common alias."

It was enough. He rang up the nearest of the Toggery Shops, demanded that some one take his place at once, seized his hat and coat, and dived for the subway.

Phœbe spent the early afternoon in writing home, killing Croton bugs, and watching the actress across the shaft pose in a chemise and picture hat before the cheval glass near the window. These occupations were beginning to lose their savor when Mrs. Delmar rang. She carried a suit-case and was dressed for the street; she lifted a heavy veil to her hat-brim as she spoke.

"Oh, I'm so glad you're in!" she exclaimed flurriedly. "It's Delia's day out, and I've been called away, and can you take care of the baby till she gets back? An aunt of mine will come this evening, but you'll go now, won't you?" Her cheeks were as rosy as ever, but her forehead was fretted with anxious lines.

"Of course I'll go—glad to help a neighbor," was Phœbe's hearty response. "But I'm so sorry you're going. Nobody sick, I hope?"

"No, matter of business. There!"—she stamped with impatience. "I knew I'd forgotten something: I meant to write a note to my husband. Do you mind if I sit down at your table and scratch it off?" She inclined her head as if listening. "Dear me, is that the baby?"

Phœbe laughed sympathetically. "You don't think you could hear him through three floors, do you? But I'll run right down. You can write your note just here." She stacked the *Rifton Records*, placing on top the package addressed to B. A. Springer. Mrs. Delmar stared at the name.

"Friend of yours?" she asked incredulously.

"One of John's very best," Phœbe explained proudly.

"Well, John'd better be a little shy of picking up friends in this town," advised Mrs. Delmar. But Phœbe shook her head, laughing, and rejoined warmly:

"No one can ever scare me about New York friends now that I've met you." She started toward the bedroom door as she added, "I'll get the key, and you can leave it with the elevator-man as you go down."

"Say," Mrs. Delmar called peremptorily after her, "put on your grandmother's chain and your ring while you're there. The kid likes to play with them, and they're awfully becoming."

"Oh, do you think so? Then, I will."

When Phœbe came back from the bedroom and exchanged keys with Mrs. Delmar, the visitor nodded at seeing the chain and patted approvingly the hand with the ring.

"I shall miss you dreadfully," said Phœbe plaintively. She hesitated an instant and then put up her face and kissed Mrs. Delmar on the mouth. "Good-by—and come back soon."

The older woman's face worked. "Oh, child, I hope I can! Well, it means a lot to me to know you're with the kid. I've a good mind—but run along; he may need you."

Phœbe squeezed her hand, knotted the scarf under her chin, and waved good-by from the door. "Gee, I thought she'd never go!" said Mrs. Delmar to herself as she laid the gold-cased note-book of her chatelaine on the table and began to write.

The baby was still sleeping when Phœbe let herself into the Delmar apartment, and she had a full hour of melancholy pleasure in folding and laying away the exquisite lingerie and negligées of her friend's disordered wardrobe, and of examining the bric-à-brac, before the baby whimpered and she could devote herself blamelessly to him. She was reducing him to spasms of laughter with "Ride a Cock Horse" when Delia slouched in.

Phoebe told her of Mrs. Delmar's hasty departure and the aunt's

expected arrival, kissed the baby, and sadly closed the door of her neighbor's apartment behind her. As she stepped into the elevator the man handed her the evening paper. "And here's a note and a key Mrs. Delmar left for you."

She took them and, after leaving the elevator, she read her friend's note by the hall light outside her own door. It said:

DEAR FEEBEE:

Don't mind me calling you that this once—it's nice to be first-naming a decent woman in this frost of a burg. I just put your bank under the pile of sheets in the linen-closet. You had n't ought to leave it around so. Believe me, I know what I'm talking about. And when you are spending the money—I suppose Best's won't be any too good—think of your

NAYBOR.

Phoebe sighed and thrust the note into her blouse. She opened the paper and glanced at the cuts under the staring head-lines. Then she read avidly, and the color went out of her face. She took a deep breath and deliberately tore out two pictures with interlocking borders and thrust them after the note.

She was turning the key in the door of her own apartment when it was jerked open and John faced her with pompadour awry and all the cock-sureness wiped from his face.

"It's gone!" he almost wept. "What did I tell you? There ain't such a thing as friendliness in all this rotten town. That oily-tongued thief! And he came here, to my house, in the very waist-coat he swiped from the shop: Sam saw him, polka-dots, pearl buttons, and all. And he said he was living here, under this very roof, and his name——"

Phoebe put her slim young hand over his mouth.

"John dear," she said gently, "if it's the bank that worries you, it's in the linen-closet—I think it is safer out of sight." She went to the cupboard called the linen-closet and took the bank from under the sheets.

"Of course," she said, not too relevantly, "people will be nice to you if you are nice to them, but generally you don't have a chance to show a burglar how friendly you feel toward him, so it's best to take precautions."

And when dinner was over and Phoebe had washed the dishes and John had wiped them, Phoebe picked up John's paper and John picked up Phoebe's paper, and neither asked why there was that great gap on the first page of the other's sheet; and John showed no curiosity when Phoebe told him sadly that her neighbor had gone away for a while.

THE BROADWAY IDEAL

By Mrs. John Van Vorst

Author of "Letters to Women in Love," "Bagby's Daughter," etc.

RICH people, it seems, seek the sunlight toward the day's end. From Napoleon's Arc de Triomphe the splendor of the setting sun appears, spreading its final glory over the Bois de Boulogne, flashing a thousand ways upon the gorgeous vehicles which have timed their promenades by the westward circling of Apollo. Hyde Park, that aristocratic garden in which not even the automobile of the wealthy may circulate at the fashionable late afternoon hours, when the thoroughbred horse and the English girl still reign supreme—Hyde Park is designated always with the telling indication "*West.*" Westward rolls our own Riverside Drive, whence the leisure class from their luxurious turnouts contemplate, across the Hudson's golden surface, the last caresses of the daylight.

Thus are the western quarters of the modern metropolis reserved for those who go in carriages. But when were *they* ever representative?

It is not in such avenues that the true character of its people may be discerned, but rather in the highways that serve as footpaths for the multitude.

Almost all the life of our beloved Broadway is on foot, and we venture to say that this same life is a manifestation of the bone and sinew, the nerve and fibre, of the American. Broadway is typical and characteristic; it is the avenue of extremes *par excellence*, with Trinity and the "Tenderloin." It ploughs through all the temptations of materialism and comes out triumphant with a call to activity for an ideal on its northward sweep toward Albany and the future, and with a gently reminiscent touch for those who descend as low as Bowling Green and who pause—for even the cable-car pauses as though in reverence of the dead that flank the way at Wall Street—who pause an instant to dream of the old, old days.

At either extremity our national road plunges off into idealism, as does the life of our own people, though, no doubt, that part of Broadway which is most talked about lies in the brilliant stretch between Twenty-third and Forty-second Streets. Here, as the epitome of modernism, we find the two goddesses of actuality, Light and Move-

ment. Splendid the illuminations, marvellous the swiftness, of the Broadway life.

No one sits down in Broadway, as does the *boulevardier* in Paris, who makes of the café terrace a social club, whence, between sips of some moderate drink which he contrives to make last through the whole of an afternoon, the city's condition, moral, political, and æsthetic, is philosophically summed up and commented upon. Nor does any one hustle brutally in Broadway, like the jobber in the London Strand.

No. Though the American highway is a distinctly business centre, it is crowded above all with people strolling for amusement. The citizen of the United States, young, tingling with latent energy, does not care to be far away from prosperity and its outward evidences at any time.

Therefore he haunts Broadway.

And the American girl, through her instinctive understanding that she is to be associated with this prosperity and this energy, haunts Broadway, too.

Taken thus as a whole, Broadway is our Sphinx, our emblem of the eternal struggle between the animal and the spiritual, the good that consoles and the bad that allures. And in the mutual encounter of the American man and the American woman on the Broadway flagstones which vibrate to the magnetic currents that constitute progress, there is forged not only the spark which outwardly illuminates with blazing brilliance, but the anvil's steady glow which means, throughout all ages, that wherever a nation's life be manifest, there the woman seeks, by her charm, to become the recompense for all that which, without promise of reward, would soon resolve itself to dull and vile materiality.



THE CONQUEROR

BY ELEANOR DUNCAN WOOD

YOU stormed a city on a day
 (Some old historians know it),
 And o'er the toppling ruins gray
 Sad sung a humble Poet;
 But for his singing, 't is most true,
 We'd never even dream of you.



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

THE AWKWARD AGE

NEVER was there an unkindler, more mistaken misnomer than this! Any one who looks upon the splendid years from fourteen to eighteen disparagingly must himself have made a far journey indeed from his own youth. Possibly he longs to be back there himself, but, like *Æsop's* fox sneering at the unreachable grapes and calling them sour, he would n't for the world have you suspect his longing.

Is it awkward to have so much energy that, in turning it upon some desired action, the superabundance flows over into other channels, and you strenuously kick the gate-post when you had meant only to unfasten the gate? No more awkward than a stream when it overflows its banks in springtime. Is it awkward to put a rough young arm about your mother's neck, kiss her soundly, knock off her glasses, muss her hair, and upset the mending basket, when you had meant merely to thank her for some favor she had done you? No more awkward than when a tree sometimes goes down before a March gale. Civilization, having grown old and somewhat prim and proper, is constantly surprised and displeased to find a boy still wholly in a state of nature, after all she has done for him; so she shakes her head in disapproval, and calls him awkward.

But, looking closer, one makes a discovery. It is only his physical being that appears to be awkward. His heart and soul and spirit are all they should be—gracile, sensitive, impulsive, roughly tender, eager, outreaching, bold, courageous, undaunted. And, what's more, never

again, at any other age, will he have all these qualities as full-fledged, as undimmed, as splendid, as now. For what has happened is that his real self has outstripped civilization, while his mere muscles and nerves have not yet caught up with her. Nature has taught him to conquer himself by the time Civilization has put him down at a desk to learn how Rome conquered the barbarians. Nature has already made him hate deceit at any price by the time Civilization begins to teach him that honesty is only one of several policies. And now, when his whole being is aquiver for adventure and daring, and he is as clean and savagely trim as a battleship prepared for action, Civilization says, "Come and sit in a parlor with me, and I will teach you social usages." She even consults with him as to the proper cut of his coat. Coat, forsooth, when all his naked impulses are aleap to fulfil themselves!

His sister, being more amenable, has been taken in hand earlier, and nine times out of ten she slips through the reproachable age quite irreproachably—from Civilization's point of view. But Nature looks at her sorrowfully, and laments, "Is this my child? Did I make this little over-timid, over-bold, corseted, pinched, deceitful, whining, wheedling feminine thing? I had meant to make a woman; fit mate for a man, fit mother for babes. How came I to make such a slip as this, I who have had æon-long apprenticeship at perfecting the race? I shall have to take a clean, fresh, vigorous primitive woman, and begin all over." And so she patiently takes the blame upon her own shoulders—just where Civilization is so quick to place it, too!—and does her thwarted best to weed out those who have been unduly tamed and kept discreetly below an untrammelled blossoming-point.

Compromise is apparently all that's left us. With expensive effort we build gymnasiums and swimming-pools, and riding and dancing schools, and we tolerate football fields and other pitched battles—little makeshift, hot-bed institutions—while all the Treasure Islands of adventure, the Thousand and One Nights of imagination, the Argonautic Expeditions of ambitious effort, the Knighthood of romance, and the Rough Riding of hardihood and endurance, are as remote as the moon. Still, at this late date there's no backing down from civilization, and perhaps especially not for those so-called awkward years. Were we to attempt that, the descent into Avernus would indeed be facile, for the path of least resistance leads indifferently down as well as up. Yet heaven knows we could safely offer the growing youth a wider opportunity for expending energy than lies in parsing "Paradise Lost," construing Virgil, and wiping his feet on the doormat before coming indoors.

It is up to us, then, the boy's elders—to use a handy and forceful phrase—either to put up or shut up. But that is exactly what we will not do. For, alas, to us matured and more or less thoroughly civilized

adults, irritated by a gouty twinge or by a disappointed ambition, or by the mere frustrations of approaching old age, there is an uncanny pleasure in laughing at awkward and untamed youth, in flouting the growing boy for a hobbledehoy! What is for us a passing amusement is for him an indelible scar, for he is sensitive to a degree. Yet in spite of us he is, and always will be, the central fact in the universe. All the sympathy and help we can offer him will still leave us in arrears to him and debtors to unspoiled nature.

HELEN COALE CREW

PRINTERS

“PRINTERS,” remarks a recent distinguished critic, “are commonly men of ideas, who have interesting minds, and are good to talk with. Mr. Howells was certainly no exception to the rule.”

Nor, of course, was Samuel Richardson, or Benjamin Franklin, or E. W. Howe, of Kansas, who set up for himself “The Story of a Country Town”—wrote it, too, in those “spare” hours when he was thoroughly tired out with his twofold task of editor and typesetter.

Yes, we also have long been of the opinion that printers are good to talk with; and, noting the deterioration in their skill which has come about since the introduction of new-fangled machines, we have been concerned to know whether the old-time compositor was indeed passing. Not the slips of that dexterous hand (errors easily remedied by the paragon proof-reader), but the incredible intuition and accuracy with which it seized upon some “take,” horrible in its hieroglyphics, torn from its context, and set it up in legible and self-respecting type—this was the marvel, no less mental than manual, which set him up in our reverence and esteem. Yet now? Why is it that the printer of to-day, with type-written copy before him, with a page in view where once he beheld a broken paragraph, strikes the keys of his machine with far less accuracy than the trained typist—often a young woman—manipulates a keyboard so similar? Apparently there is no exculpating answer, and that is why we were prepared to mourn the passing of the expert compositor.

But we had not counted upon Harvard University. Little did we think to read its announcement: the establishment of a two-years collegiate course in printing—printing as an art and printing as a valuable branch of commerce. “Doctors of *topography*”—thus has some slovenly linotypist of untidy journalism set up, in a daily contemporary, the very words that should inspire him to accuracy. For accuracy, let us hope, is still an element of art—whether it be the lowly art of the editorial writer or the art of the artist who puts the editorial in type.

Still, we are disposed to be lenient to compositors, even when zeal outruns discretion. Like the poets, they, too, are the victims of temperament. Did not Thomson J. Hudson—himself a printer, and author of "The Law of Psychic Phenomena"—discover in them a susceptibility to subjectivity, and hence a greater inclination to explore the mysteries beyond swinging doors? Never shall we forget the effect of that hypothesis on a newspaper compositor of our acquaintance, in a Western town. Obsessed, one night, with the fear that his subliminal self was really getting the upper hand, he started to walk home, and passed three sets of swinging doors in safety. A few blocks more, and all temptation to loiter by the way would be left behind. Suddenly, just ahead of him, there emerged from an alley the apparition of an elephant. Objective consciousness began a wrestling bout with "suggestion." Aware of psychic pitfalls, he suspected a trap. It was, of course, an illusion, yet how potent and persistent. "Gwan!" he shouted inconsistently, and straightway was ashamed. The phantasmal pachyderm stood its ground. It was not a premonitory or an expectant elephant—of that he was confident; but it did not help him in the least. A beast of peripheral birth, or one escaped from the darkest Africa of ideation to the threshold of consciousness? As our friend remarked subsequently—"you could search *him*." Well, there he stood wavering; and the vision began to walk. It was (*mirabile dictu*) a real elephant, escaped from a show, just come to town, that had not advertised.

The same thing, of course, *might* happen to you or to us. The point is that it *did* happen to a printer. Whether it would have happened to him had he been to Harvard we do not pretend to say. We are too well educated for that, even if we are not a Doctor of Typography.

W. T. LARNED



CHRISTMAS EVE

BY CAROLINE GILTINAN

MOTHER of God, pure, undefiled,
Wandering through the snow,
Bringing us the Holy Child,
Have you no place to go?

Are we as cruel and blind to-day,
And in our hearts the sin,
Turning you, Mother of God, away:
Again no room at the Inn?

CURRENCY REFORM UNDER PRESIDENT WILSON

By Edward Sherwood Mead, Ph.D.

ARTICLE I

PRESIDENT WILSON was not elected on a platform of currency reform. In fact, his announcement that the second step in his programme would be a thorough-going revision of the banking system caused much surprise and not a little uneasiness among those who were most affected, the bankers, especially the bankers of the larger cities. This uneasiness has been increased by the passage of the Glass bill through the House of Representatives, a measure which proposes such a drastic reconstruction of our banking system as to amount to a revolution.

The announced object of this measure is to set the country free from centralized control of money and credit, which, in the opinion of President Wilson and his advisers, is the most serious obstacle to the free development of our resources and to the re-creation of the free competition which under the name of the "New Freedom" it is the object of this administration to restore. Before we are ready to consider the details of this measure and to attempt an estimate of its probable effect, let us first call to mind the familiar features of the National Banking System, which the new institution is to supplant.

The national banks, of which there were 7,488 at the date of the last report (August 9, 1913), are organized to serve two purposes: first, to issue currency secured by the deposit of government bonds, and second, to perform the ordinary banking functions of deposit, loan, and the transmission of money from one point to another.

Until recent years, the chief point of criticism of the system has been the alleged inelasticity of the note issues. In order to make a profit on national bank notes, the banker must keep them in circulation all the time. Suppose he invests \$100,000 in government bonds at par, paying 2 per cent., and deposits those bonds with the United States Treasurer at Washington to serve as security for \$100,000 of notes. On these bonds, which remain his property, he receives \$2,000 a year. Suppose he lends the notes at 6 per cent. interest. This gives him \$6,000 a year more, or

a total of \$8,000 gross profit. This seems to be a profitable investment. But we are not yet at the end of the matter. Upon these notes, for what useful purpose does not appear, the banker must pay a tax of \$500, and he must also pay about \$62.50 a year on account of various expenses incurred in operating the system. His profits, therefore, when bonds can be purchased at par, are \$7,437.50, nearly $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., still a good return on the investment.

We must make one further deduction, however, before we arrive at the banker's real profit. If he had not invested this \$100,000 in government bonds paying 2 per cent., he could have bought commercial paper with the money, paying him 6 per cent. interest. So, in order to determine his exact profit on the purchase of the bonds and the issue of the notes, we must deduct the \$6,000 from the \$7,437.50 of profit as shown above, leaving \$1,437.50 as the return on the \$100,000, or 1.43 per cent. This profit, small enough at best, depends upon the banker's keeping in circulation, loaned out, if you please, all the notes. If, for example, \$25,000 out of the \$100,000 notes remained unissued, he would miss \$1,500 of his profit, and his loss would be \$62.50. That is, he would make \$62.50 if he had bought no bonds, and had invested all his money in 6 per cent. promissory notes.

It is this situation which is responsible for the much criticised inelasticity of our national bank note system. Practically the whole amount authorized is at all times in circulation. As fast as notes come in they are paid out by the banker: his own notes, for the reason stated above; and the notes of other banks, because the law does not allow him to count national bank notes as a part of the required reserve against his deposits. So he pays these notes out as fast as received, or sends them to New York to swell his deposit account, or sorts them according to the bank of issue and sends them to a Redemption Agency in Washington, where they are redeemed out of a fund of lawful money amounting to 5 per cent. of its note issue, which each bank keeps there for the purpose.

Now, the claim is made that the country suffers because of the rigidity of our bank note system; that the amount changes so slowly that it can hardly be said to change at all. Where business is dull, and the demand for money is small, bank notes pile up in the money centres, keep interest rates low, and stimulate speculation; and when the demand for money is active and strong, when business could absorb a large amount of additional currency, the banks cannot furnish it, even if they desired, because there are no more government bonds to be had.

Especially is the system of note issue criticised for its behavior in time of panic, when the banks are being pressed for cash by their depositors. At the time when it is supremely important that they should be able to put out more bank notes, which would satisfy the depositor as

well as any other kind of money, they are unable to do so, and, as in 1907, their only recourse to save themselves from losing all their cash is to tell the depositor, in substance, that his money is there, but that he cannot have it; in short, to suspend cash payments.

Before President Wilson and his advisers, official and academic, addressed themselves to the correction of this alleged evil of our system of bank note issue, Congress, in the Aldrich-Vreeland bill passed in 1908, had provided a remedy for the trouble to be applied in times of panic. That law permits the national banks organized in currency associations centring about the cities to issue up to \$500,000,000 of a special kind of bank notes, based upon various kinds of securities and short-time commercial notes which the officers of the association will approve. These emergency notes are delivered by the Treasury Department to the currency associations for the account of the banks depositing the collateral. These notes bear a high rate of interest; they will be issued only where severe monetary stringency is threatened, and they are properly styled "emergency" currency. The Aldrich-Vreeland law, while its provisions have never been put into practice, provides, in the opinion of the banking interests, an effective device for preventing a money famine such as that which afflicted the country in 1907.

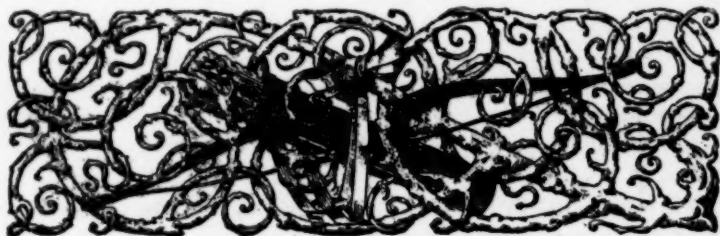
Of much greater importance, although this fact has very recently been recognized, is the deposit function of the national banks. As compared with \$724,459,849 outstanding August 9, 1913, of bank notes, the national banks report \$5,761,338,731 individual deposits, August 9, 1913. Both notes and deposits are immediate liabilities of the banks. They must be paid on demand. Both are secured, the notes by bonds, a small money reserve, and a first lien on the assets of the banks; the deposits by larger reserves, and by all the assets of the banks subject to the lien of the notes. Both notes and deposits are used as currency, the notes directly, the deposits by the assistance of checks, drafts, and bills of exchange which the depositor draws against them. Most of the business of the country, an amount estimated at 95 per cent., is transacted by means of checks drawn against the deposits in national and state banks and trust companies. The so-called "deposit currency" is by far the most important element of our money and credit system.

Now, it has been charged, and the charge is believed by the Wilson administration, that these bank deposits are, in great measure, controlled by a group of men whose influence is dominating in the large banks and trust companies of the great cities. The country banks, it is claimed, because they deposit a large part of the surplus funds with the large city institutions, where they can obtain a small rate of interest; because they rely upon these large banks to lend some of the surplus funds for them, and because they are frequently forced to borrow from the city banks, have unconsciously coöperated to place at the disposal of the

men who control these city banks the disposition of a large part of the loan funds of the entire country. These deposits, concentrated in the great cities, are loaned to those enterprises and individuals, and to those only, who are favored and countenanced by the "inside ring." Any company or individual who incurs the displeasure of the "Money Trust," it is claimed, has great difficulty in obtaining credit. No new enterprise of magnitude, requiring the initial aid of the banks, can be started without their consent. Because of this same control of credit, the "Trust" is powerful in the directorates of all the large corporations. These companies often require assistance from the "Trust" in the form of temporary advances. In return, they carry large deposits with the "Trust Banks," and admit the officers of these banks to their directorates.

Space does not suffice for a complete statement of the case against the alleged "Money Trust." The main outlines of the indictment are here presented.

It is the object of the Glass bill, or rather the Owen-Glass bill, to remedy these evils. The bill proposes to provide a national bank currency which shall be sufficiently elastic both to provide for the ordinary fluctuations of business and for the emergencies of panic. It proposes also to destroy the "Centralized Control of Credit," by organizing a number of Reserve Banks in which the national banks shall be stockholders, and which shall hold the surplus funds of all the banks. It is also proposed by the new system, by permitting and even requiring the Reserve Banks to loan to national banks, to "mobilize" the loan funds of the entire country, making them available for use in any section, according as circumstances may dictate. It is finally proposed to place all these reserve banks under the control of the President. The details of the scheme by which these vast and sweeping reforms are to be accomplished will be presented in the January number.



ARROWS AND TARGETS

THE present fashion in Woman's dress is the survival of the fittest.
IF there were no double standards, there would be no double lives.
MAN forgets; that is his tragedy. Woman remembers; that is hers.

Faith Baldwin

